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AN EARNEST INVITATION TO THE SACRAMENT OF THE Lords Supper.

BY
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Rector of *Bath.*

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AN EXPOSITION
OF THE
Lords Supper.

BY
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Master of Arts.

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To the Right Reverend

Dr. Peter Mews,

LORD BISHOP Elect

OF

Bath and *Wells.*

MY LORD,

I Was just sending away the last sheets of the ensuing plain discourse to the Press, when the news

came of your being made Bishop of this Dioceſs: I was exceedingly tranſported with the tidings of ſo great a bleſsing befaln this *part of the Church, and could not reſtrain my joy from running out into this Application & Addreſs, which I intend not ſo much to* congratulate *your new* Dignity, *as the* happineſs *of* Us, *your* Clergy, *and this whole*

whole People, in the relation we now have to so excellent a person. Your Lordships wisdom, justice, piety, *and* diligence *have made themselves so eminent in the long continued, happy, and applauded Government of one of the most famous Universities of the world, that we confidently promise our selves great felicities*

from the Paternal Presidency *and* Authority *of such an* experienced Governour; *And I believe there is not a concern'd man, who is sensible of the advantages of good order, but blesseth* God *and the* King *for so* gracious *and* desirable *an* Election. *This, My Lord, I might speak upon the* publick *Fame of your known merits, but besides*

ſides that I have had particular experience of your wiſdom and candour, which gives me a greater paſsion to declare the veneration I have for you; and I wiſh I could do it in a way ſutable to your great worth, and mine own reſentments of it; but inſtead of a proper teſtimony, I muſt beg your Lordſhip to accept of a ſincere one; and ſuch

I here make you in this small offering, the slender First-fruits of your Dioceſs.

The Diſcourſe I firſt deſign'd only for the uſe of my own people, but I knew not how to get tranſcribed Copies enough for them; and I conſider'd too many others needed ſome ſuch exhortation, as well as thoſe of my particular Charge, and therefore thought

thought that this little Essay might not be wholly useleſs *to the Publick. I have writ it in a* plain *and* unheeded *ſtyle, becauſe I judg* ſuch *moſt* fit *for* practical *matters, eſpecially in applications to the* populace; *and take it for an* eſtabliſht, eternal Rule *for ſuch Addreſſes, whether by* preaching *or* writing, *that they ſhould be performed*

formed in the way that is moſt eaſie *and* natural; *and nothing ought to be* ſtudied *in the* language *for* ſuch *occaſions, but how to* expreſs *the matter moſt* ſutably *and* plainly. *But I need not have made this Apologie to your Lordſhip, who know, That* good ſenſe *in an* eaſie *and* proper *phraſe is for ever the* trueſt *and* beſt eloquence:

quence: *There is more cauſe I ſhould crave your pardon for prefixing your Lordſhips name before a diſcourſe of ſo many* other *imperfections*: This, *my Lord, I do, and have this to plead for the obtaining it, that I was* tranſported *by the* occaſion *and the deſire* I *have to make known how happy* I *eſteem* this Diocels *in ſo* venerable *a* Prelate;

late; *and how much* particularly I *am rejoyced at this* welcome *Providence, being*

Right Reverend Father,

Your Lordships most affectionate Honourer and humble Servant,

F. G.

TO THE PEOPLE of my Charge.

My Dear Neighbours,

ALthough *We* of the publick Miniſtry cannot expect to do *much* by our perſwaſions, and indeavours, in ſuch an Age as *this*; Yet we ought to perſevere in our work with Courage and Reſolution, and not ſuffer our ſelves to be overborn by any difficulties, or diſcouragements whatſoever: For Duty belongs to us, but events unto God, who will reward the Labourers whatever be the ſucceſs of their Labours. And as every Miniſter of Religion ought to be active, and reſolved in the *work* and *patience* of the Goſpel; So he ſhall then beſt acquit himſelf in it when he ſtudies the *proper needs* of the Age, and place wherein he lives,

and accordingly directs his indea-
vours to provide for them. Now
there is nothing, that I know
that is wanted more in our Days
than a due sense of the necessity
and advantages of the Holy *Sacra-
ment* of the *Lord's Supper*, the ge-
neral neglect, not to say contemp-
of which, hath, I am persuaded
been a great and sad occasion o
the debauchery, and divisions tha
are among us; And I verily think
that there could not be a more effe-
ctual means to reduce us to *So-
briety* and *Union*, then a frequent
and reverend use of that divi-
Institution. From this persuasio
I have earnestly, and often (as yo
can bear me witness) press'd th
great duty upon your conscience
and affectionately recommended
to your practice. I have repre-
sented its *Nature* with all possib
plainness, and urged its *Necessity* wi
a *vigour* in some measure suitab
to so great an occasion; I ha
told you the *danger* of wilful ne-

ect on the one hand; and the *be-*
efits of due performance, on the
ther: But notwithſtanding all,
here are too many of you, that ſeem
et inſenſible, and unconcerned. I
ave publickly deſired thoſe that
re either *ignorant* or *diſſatisfied*, to
ccept of my private help, and In-
ruction, and have offer'd them the
moſt of my aſſiſtance for their
etter information, and direction.
nd after all this, I know not
hat I can do more to ſerve you
this great intereſt of yours, ex-
pt I put ſomething into your
ands that may be ever with you,
nd that you may conſider on all
caſions. *Publick Teachings* by
ord of mouth, are too much
oked upon as *cuſtomary exerciſes*,
nd on that account, they looſe
eir force with *ſome*; and the
eateſt part even of the better Au-
tors cannot keep their minds ſo
oſe, and intent, to a Diſcourſe
oken, as to receive it in its full
idence, and power; Or, though

the hearers are never so diligent and careful, our words are forgotten quickly, and the affections they raise, vanish without any considerable effect upon their will. For which Reasons, I have resolved upon this Course, to cast some of the plain things I have preached concerning the *Holy Sacrament* into writing; That those who are unfit for that great duty by reason of *Ignorance*, may have the properest means of Instruction that I can provide for them, always in their power, and when they please before their eyes: And that those that *deprive* themselves of the Benefits of this most excellent Ordinance, by reason of the *Mistake* of their erring understanding may also have the most suitable help I can give, towards the setting their minds right, and the reconciling them to their Priviledge, and Duty.

For these purposes, I shall (my manner is) represent what

ave to ſay in the moſt *diſtinct*, nd *eaſie* way I can contrive, avoi- ing all things that are *hard*, ei- her in *notion* or *expreſſion*; And rive, as near as is poſſible, to ſpeak ll along to the moſt ordinary un- erſtandings. For I look upon *lainneſs* as the beſt dreſs for Truth; nd my great care, and indea- our conſtantly is, to be *underſtood* y *all*, as far as the ſubject will ear.

In the purſuit of what I intend mean, by Gods help, to proceed n this order. (1) I ſhall diſcourſe vith all convenient brevity, and lainneſs, the *Nature* and *deſign* of he *Lords Supper*; and

(2) Give the Generall *Reaſons* o inforce the Duty; under which ead, I ſhall apply my ſelf to two orts of Refuſers, *viz.* Thoſe that neglect (1) on the account of pure *careleſneſs*, and *ſtupidity*; and (2) Thoſe that ſtand off upon the ſcore of *miſtakes* of *Conſcience*. In treat- ing with the former, I ſhall ſhew

that their obstinate refusal takes o
all pretence they can have to Chri
stianity, and puts them into th
state of Infidels, and Heathens, ye
into a *worse* condition, than *th*
of *meer unbelievers*. As to the o
ther sort, *viz.* The *dissatisfied* i
Conscience, I shall consider the
Reasons against Communicating wit
us according to the way of ou
Church, and shew that they ar
no *justifiable grounds*, why the
should refuse to join with us i
that solemn part of Christia
worship.

CHAP. II.

I Begin with the *First*, The *Na*
ture of the *Lords Supper*. Con
cerning *this*, there hath been a
infinite diversity of opinions, an
disputes; The effects of whic
differences have been much *Noise*
and many *Tumults*, *Schisms*, an
Wars

Wars, with a vaſt heap of miſchiefs, and calamities to the Chriſtian world: I ſhall not therefore trouble you with any thing of needleſs controverſie, or notion, on this argument; but ſtate it ſo far only, as it relates to *practice*; And I ſhall take all I have to ſay about it from the *Word of God*, the beſt Rule to guide us in the Enquiry. And if *diſputing* men would have been content with *it's* declarations in this matter, all the trouble, and miſchiefs had been avoided. But this hath been the miſery; ſome govern their thoughts of this Holy Inſtitution by corrupt, and *novell Traditions*, and others by meer vain and *arbitrary phancies*; Yea, Thoſe who have been right in the main, have yet ſo mingled the plain truth with *alluſions*, and ſpoken of it in ſuch a *phantaſtical*, and *uncertain* way, that ordinary underſtandings have been confounded; and thoſe that are for down-right ſence, without the mixtures of

imagination, have not been able to tell what to make of *that*, which they heard described in such a phanciful, and various fashion. This particularly hath been my own case; I had heard men preach so humoursomely, and so diversly about the *Sacrament*; So *much* out of their *own* heads, and so *little* out of the *Oracles* of *God*, That I was quite bewildred, and lost; and come at last to that pass, that I *knew nothing* at all of it; which ignorance, and confusion of thoughts was the natural effect of such discourses; For when men once ramble in the way of *phrases*, *metaphors*, and *conceits*, as they loose themselves, so they perfectly dazzle, and amaze those others, whom they should instruct. I therefore betook my self to the *plain expressions* of *Scripture* concerning this matter; In *them* I found an easie account of the *nature*, and *design* of this divine *Ordinance*. And whither shall we go to inquire after it but to the words

words of *Inſtitution* themſelves? *Theſe* I ſhall conſider *firſt*; and then gather together thoſe other paſſages of Scripture, which tend to the further explication of it.

1. The words of Inſtitution are *Mat.* 26. [*Take, Eat, This is my Body.* v. 26. *and Drink ye all of it, For this is my bloud of the new Teſtament*, v. 27, 28.] To which is added in the Goſpel of St. *Luke* [Do this in Remembrance of me.] *Luke* 22. 19. Theſe words I ſhall ſeverally explain, and then infer from them what is the *nature*, and *deſign* of the holy appointment.

Take, Eat, This is my Body — and, **This is my Bloud** — Here I take notice, That **Body**, and **Blood**, do not relate to the *bread*, and *wine*; But to the *actions*, *Eat* and *Drink*, as appears plainly in the * Original. 'Tis not *this bread*, and

* Τυτο, *not* τουτο.

this wine, are my *body* and *bloud*
but *this Sacramental eating and*
drinking of it; In *this* Christs *body*
and *bloud*, viz. His *Incarnation*
and *sufferings* are represented to
us. And yet by a Figure, The con-
secrated Elements may be call'd his
body and *bloud* also; so the *Form*
at the eating the *paschal Supper*
was, *This is the bread of affliction*
which our Fathers did eat in Egypt
Not the very same, but a *Memorial*
of it, and the State of bondage
from which they were deliver'd.
Thus 1 *Cor.* 10. 3. 4. *Manna* is
called *spiritual bread*, and the *Rock*
spiritual drink, and that *Rock*
Christ; Not that they could pos-
sibly be so in the Letter, but they
signified that *spiritual* food, and
were tokens of Christs Presence.
And thus the *Sacramental Bread*
and *Wine* may be call'd his *Body*
and *Bloud*, that is, *Figures* and *Re-*
presentations of them; and that, not
barely of his *sufferings*, but (as the
* Father notes) of all the Mysteries

* *Basil.*

of the Incarnation, which are *signified*, and *included*. Thus anciently the Elements were call'd, *Figures*, *Symbols*, *Images*, *sensible things* instead of *spiritual*; and we know 'tis in common use to call the *Picture* by the name of *that* it represents, as *this is a man*, and *that* an *Angel*. So that there is no ground for the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, in these words, as the *Roman* Church pretends. But I wave disputes, and come to the next expression to be consider d.

[**This is the New Testament**, or * *Covenant* **in my Bloud**] *viz.* The *Sign*, and *Seal* of the *Covenant* made in his Bloud; A *Covenant* wherein *God* ingageth to bestow on us *pardon* of Sin, and eternal *Life*; and *we* promise *faithful* and *sincere* obedience. Thus in the eldest times, *Eating*, and *Drinking* were *Covenant Rites*:

* Διαθήκη.

as

as we may see in the compacts between *Isaac* and *Abimelech*, *Gen.* 26. 30. and between *Jacob* and *Laban*, *Gen.* 31. 44, 46. So that the Sacrament is not a *bare Sign*, but 'tis the *Seal* of Gods gracious *Covenant* made with us in his Son.

[**Do this in Remembrance of me**] It hath always been usual to commemorate, and remember Benefactors and great Mercies by *Feasts*, and *Festivals*. The Heathens had their * *Feasts* in memory of their *Heroes*; And the *Passover*, a Type of *this* Supper, was appointed to preserve the memory of the Israelites deliverance out of *Egypt*. *Exod.* 12. 14. The *Lamb* was eaten with *bitter herbs*, to *commemorate* the *bitterness* of their servitude; the *Red Wine* was a Remembrance of their blood which *Pharaoh* spilt, and the *unleavened bread*, to remember them,

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*As 'Αιάκεια, & 'Αιάντεια—

that

hat they carried such out of *Egypt* at their departure: And thus ur blessed Saviour hath appointed his *holy Rite* to imprint upon us he *memory* of what he hath *done*, nd *suffer'd* for us, that we might ot forget our Deliverance by him, rom a bondage greater than *Egyptian*.

And now from *these* main passages thus explain'd, 'tis easie to infer, That *The Sacrament of the Lords Supper is a* Memorial Feast *appointed for a solemn Remembrance of Christ our Lord; and a* Seal *of the* Covenant *that God hath made with us*

in

in him. Two things th
it is principally design'd for, (
To *Remember* us of our Lord, a
Saviour, and (2) to be a *Seal*
the *Covenant* of Grace; of ea
briefly.

(1) 'Tis for a Remembrance, n
only of his *Person*, or *only* of h
Sufferings, or any other particu
part of his Ministry; But we a
by it required *thankfully*, and *af*
fectionately to call to mind, *All* th
he hath *done*, and *all* that he ha
suffer'd; His *Life*, *Doctrine*, a
Laws; His *Passion*, *Resurrectio*
and *Ascension*; His *Victory* over *Si*
Death, and *Hell*; and the *gracio*
Covenant that God hath made wi
us through him: *These* are all i
cluded in his *Body*, and *Blood* (
I intimated before) of which th
Holy Sacrament is a *Sign*, an
Memorial: And the remembranc
of *these*, which we are call'd to b
the *Divine Institution*, is not *onl*
some *slight*; and *passing* thoughts
bu

ut a *ſolemn* and moſt *ſerious* fixing f them upon our minds, in order o the inflaming our affections vith love, and our wills with reſo- ution, that we may live anſwerably o that excellent Religion of the Holy Jeſus which we profeſs.

(2) 'Tis the *Seal* of a *Covenant* [*The new Teſtament in my bloud*] The *Covenant* is, That God will give *pardon* of Sin, and eternal *Life*, upon the conditions of *Faith* and *Repentance*. This *He ſeals* to us in the *Sacrament*, and aſſures us, that he, for *his* part, will make good *his Promiſes*; and we on *ours*, *ſeal*, that wee will indeavour to perform the *conditions*. So that the *Lords Supper* is a *Sacrament* by which we *confirm* thoſe ingage- ments we are entred into at *Baptiſm*. *Then* our *Sureties* undertook for us, that we ſhould be faithful in the Covenant; and in *this* holy Ordi- nance we take all thoſe obligations upon *our ſelves*, and in our *own* perſons promiſe to act according to them. This

This plainly, and in short, is th
nature and *design* of the *Holy S*
crament; concerning which, the
are some *other* expressions in Scr
pture which I shall consider briefl
in order to the further explicat
on of the sacred Mystery. Th
chief are *these*. 'Tis called (1) Th
Cup of blessing. 1 *Cor.* 10. 16. (2
The *Communion of the Body*, an
Bloud of Christ, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16. an
in the Duty 'tis said (3) That
shew the Lords Death. 1 *Cor.* 11
26.

(1) The **Cup of Blessing**
viz. of *Praise* and and *Thanksgiving*
Our Saviour *Matth.* 26 *gave than*
when he took the Cup. The Jew
used to conclude their *paschal* Sup
per with a Cup of Wine, at whic
time they sung an Hymn, and there
fore call'd it the *Cup* of * *praisin*
and * *blessing*. And the Heathen
also after their feasts had thei

* Ποτήριον ὑμνήσεως, καὶ * εὐλογίας.
* *cup*

cups of *Praiſe* to their Gods; which ſome take to be the *Cup* of *Devils* mention'd by the Apoſtle, 1 Cor. 10. 21. So that by this we are taught to remember our Lord at his Table with *praiſe* and *grateful* acknowledgments: And therefore the Ancients from hence call'd the Lords *Supper*, the *Holy Euchariſt*, namely, a *Feaſt* of *Thanksgiving*; and the Solemnity was always attended with an hymn of Praiſe.

(2) **Communion,** (or * Communication) **of the body and bloud of Chriſt,** *viz.* The *Sacrament* is a ſacred *Rite* in which God *communicates*, and imparts to all worthy Receivers, the *benefits* of Chriſts *Incarnation*, and *ſufferings*. He doth then *ratifie*, *confirm*, and *ſolemnly* exhibit them, to thoſe that duly attend upon that Divine appointment.

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* Ἀγαθῶν δαίμων. & Διὸς Σωτῆρος.
* Κοινωνία.

(3) As often as ye eat- ye do shew the Lords deat viz. (1) *Declare* unto *men*, w joy and glorying, that we belie he *dyed* for *such* purposes, and t he hath procured inestimable *be fits* for us by his Death. T therefore we will adhere, and st unto him; and that neither *dea nor life shall separate us from the l of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* A (2) It imports our shewing and d claring *this* also unto *God*, and pl ding it with him for his *pard* and his *grace*, for the sake of t meritorious Passion which we forth, and commemorate. Th passages fall under the Accoun have before given of the Ordinan and shew *how* we are to *Remem* our Lord in it, and *what* we m expect in so doing.

Thus briefly of the *Nature* a *design* of the Sacrament; I mig have run the matter into a lar Discourse, but I resolve all con nient brevity. In what I ha

said, you will find all things that are *necessary* and *essential* to the *Ordinance*; For the *niceties* and *disputes* that are about it, you need not trouble your selves with them; But *so much* of it as I have represented (I mean in the substance of the particulars) 'tis fit you should know: And therefore I intreat you, especially those of the more ordinary understandings, to return back, and fix your thoughts a while upon those periods, and read them over and again, till you have a *clear*, and *distinct* apprehension of the Subject they explain. I know the thoughts of most are very *confused*, and much in the *dark* about it, and while they are *so*, they cannot demean themselves as they ought in the performance of the Duty, nor receive those benefits that otherwise they might from it. I beseech you therefore not to content your selves with a *single*, and *running* reading; Many Divine Truths will not enter into our minds

minds at *first* sight; or, if they d
they are gone, as soon as they a
received: Though they are nev
so *plainly* expresst, yet they man
times *seem dark*, till we look
gain; Or though they strike o
minds fully, yet they pass out
Memory, except we reflect, an
think them over; I hope therefo
you will do your selves this right
And I thus urge you to consid
ration of my Accounts, not as
I fancied I had made any *discoveri*
in them, which were not mad
before (No, *These* are known thing
among the Intelligent sort of Chri
stians) But I do it, because I spea
to the *meaner*, and *less improved* un
derstandings. And perhaps from
the Representation of the affai
which I have given, the *others* als
may receive the advantage of
clearer order, and method to thei
thoughts, and be deliver'd from
many *unnecessary* and *uncertain no*
tions that they have imagined t
be of great consequence to be be
lieve

ieved and known, when either hey are not *true*, or not *conſide-able*.

CHAP. III.

I Come now to the main thing I deſign, *viz.* (II) To *urge* this great *duty* which I have thus explain'd, and to do what I can to perſuade you, to the conſcientious practice of it. Now there are two things that commonly oblige men to action, namely Conſiderations of **Duty** and of **Intereſt.** And there are *both* here, in the higheſt degree, to ingage us. I ſhall diſcourſe of each.

(1) We have the Motive, and Reaſon of **Duty**, and *Duty* in *ſuch* circumſtances, as have the greateſt obligation in them. A ***Lord***, who hath all *right* to our obedience both by *nature*, and by *dear purchaſe*,

chaſe, hath *commanded* us to *do thi*
And, A *Saviour*, who ha
reſcued us from the Jaws of He
and Death, and hath procured fo
us endleſs life and glory, hath r
quired it of us. Here is the *Auth*
rity of *juſt Power*, and the *Oblig*
tion of *aſtoniſhing Love*. We are boun
by the *ſubmiſſions* we owe a *Sovereig*
Lord, and by the *gratitude* we ow
an adorable *Benefactor*. The *So*
of *God*, the *King* of *both* the *world*
The *Redeemer* of Men, 'tis *He* tha
commands; and his *commandment*
are not *grievous*; Had he put upo
our necks a yoke *heavier* then th
Jewiſh Ceremonies, had he injoin'
a *greater* number of *coſtly* and *labo*
rious Rites than thoſe, and requi
red ſo many of ſuch ſervices
from us, as would have take
up *all* our *time*, and imployed *a*
our *ſtrength*, and wearied *all* ou
powers; Yet *theſe* we ought to have
obſerved without *repining*, and
thought all but *ſmall* homage to hi
Greatneſs,

reatneſs, and ſmall acknowledg-
ent of his Love. *All theſe* had
en *nothing* in compare with what
hath done for us *freely* without
erit, or obligation; *Nothing*, to
s leaving the boſome of the Fa-
er, and the glories of the upper
orld, and the Hallelujahs of the
eſſed; *nothing*, to his deſcend-
g to a world of Infamy, and woe;
thing to his ſuffering the ſcorns
d contradictions of Sinners, the
eath of the Croſs, and the wrath
God: So that we had been
retchedly ungrateful ſhould we
ave ſtuck at any of *theſe*, or as
uch as *murmured* at them: But
r Lord hath not given us any
ch tryal of our Love, and obe-
ience; He hath deliver'd the
orld from the Yoke of Ceremo-
ial bondage, And (beſides *Bap-
ſm*) hath appointed but *this one
ite* for us to obſerve; A *Rite*, that
neither *troubleſome*, nor *coſtly*, *te-
ious*, nor *laborious*: And what
rodigies of baſeneſs ſhall we make

our

our selves, if we refuse to take n
tice of this his *gracious* Institutio
With what face can we look u
and call our selves by his nam
How shamfully are we upbraid
by the practice of *those* we cou
barbarous? Let us look abroad in
the world and consider the m
brutish Idolaters; *They* will
their beloved *flesh*, and *burn* th
deerest children, and sometime
suffer themselves to be *crush'd*
death by the Carriages that be
their *Idols*; because their *Infern*
Gods require, and are pleas
with such testimonies of their h
mage. Hath the *Devil* such
sequious servants? Are those *Cr*
Rites, which he appoints, observ
with so much duty? Will tho
poor wretches do, and suffer a
thing rather than displease the
ugly Deities? And are *we Christ*
ans; *Professing* Servants of the *S*
of *God*, our *Sovereign* and *Rede*
mer, and do we neglect *this* h
main, *just*, and *gracious* appoinment

s *this* too much to do for him? and do we owe him so much *less*, than *Cannibals* do their *Idols*? Certainly Those men of the *Desart*, those *wild Savages* of the woods shall rise up in *judgment* with such a *generation* of pretending Christians, and shall condemn it. Methinks *their* diligence, and exactness in those hard and painful services should cover us with blushing and confusion, at our carelesness, and neglect of the easie duty our Lord requires from us; And we shall see great reason to be ashamed of our omissions, if we consider, that our bless'd Redeemer had lived a Life of *Poverty* and *dishonour* for our sakes; He had instructed us in the way of Happiness by his excellent *Doctrine*, and *precepts*; and had gone before us in an incomparable *example*; and now he was just about to *compleat* his Love, by *offering* himself unto *death* to deliver us from *it*, and thereby to give an instance of the most amazing goodness that ever was; At

this time, he injoines his Disciples to *do* something in *Remembrance* of Him. And *Lord*! *What* is sufficient to be done in *memory* of *such* Love? Had he required the *dearest* of our bloud, and the *choicest* of our substance to be offer'd to him in acknowledgment, should we have thought *such* demands *unreasonable*? Would ordinary ingenuity have scrupled to make those Sacrifices for such kindness? But he calls not for *these*. He looks for the *First*-born of our *bodies*, nor *choice* of our *Flocks*; No, He appoints only a *feast* of *Memorials*, and commands us to *remember* his Love in *that*: And shall we not observe him in so small a matter? Hath he not *deserv'd* to be *remembred* by us? or do we know any *better* way, to signifie our remembrance of him, than *that* which himself hath prescribed? Should we not do as much as *this*, at the request of an *ordinary* dying Friend? And is not the *greatest*, and the *best* that ever creature ha

had, worthy of ſuch a teſtimony of affection from us? I am ſure there is no one can be ſo brutiſh as to deny the *juſtneſs* of the *Duty*, and methinks none ſhould be ſo unworthy as to refuſe complyance with it. I beſeech you therefore, if the *Conſiderations* of *Duty* can do any thing with you; If there be any *obligation* in the higheſt *Authority*, if there be any *allurement* in the ſweeteſt *love*; If your *profeſſion* of ſubjection to Chriſt be not only a *Complement*, and if he have any real intereſt in your Souls; give this proof then, of your *being* in *earneſt*, *what*, which you would be *thought*; Refuſe no more of his Invitations; Neglect no more of his calls; Conſider the *expreſneſs* of his command, and that *this* Law is *peculiarly his*; *His* in ſuch a ſence as (*Baptiſm* excepted) *no other Law is*. For his *other* injunctions are but *enforcements* of the Laws that God had written in the old Scriptures, and in our hearts, But this is his own

proper commandment; By obeying him in *this*, we particularly own him as our *Law-giver*, and by refusing we *renounce* him.

But if the *Considerations* of *Duty* should not prove so powerful with you; There are *others*, which generally use to be of more force, nammely *Those* taken from our *Interest*, and here

(II) I desire you to consider the great *Benefits* that a worthy Communicant receives from the holy Sacrament. *This* is not a mere barren ceremony, or unprofitable rite, but an Instrument and means to produce and to convey unspeakable blessings to us. Here we receive

(1) *Confirmation* of our *Faith*. All habits are increas'd by being exercised, and this Ordinance requires great *exercises* of the grace of Faith; For here we make a *solemn* declaration of it, and thereby bind it stronger upon our souls. And to the exercise of this Divine Grace, and the sincere and public

profession

profeſſion of it, there is no doubt but God will ſuperadd his ſpecial aid and bleſſing, that out of *weakneſs it may be made ſtrong.* So that, if your Faith be *weak* and *trembling*, If you are perplext with vexatious doubts, and temptations to unbelief, apply your ſelves to this holy Ordinance as to the proper remedy. *Declare* your Faith, and *pray* for more. If you *believe*, God will *help your unbelief. Mar.* 9. 24.

(2) Our *Repentance* will be heightned by our Due communicating at the Lords Table, and that in reſpect of all its great Acts, *viz.* 1. *Sence* and *Sorrow* for Sin; 2. *Confeſſion* of it; and 3. *Averſation* from it. For the Firſt.

(1) The *evill* of Sin is never ſo well-decerned as in its *effects.* It is *ſweet* in the *mouth*, but *bitter* in the *belly*; And there is no greater evidence of its vileneſs and malignity, then *that* we have in the ſufferings of our Lord, which are ſet before

us in the Holy Sacrament. And certainly sin must needs be an *accursed* thing (saith the considering Communicant) That the blessed Jesus must thus be made a *Curse* for it; That is doubtless a mighty evil, that cannot be expiated but by the bloud of God; And Sin, without question, hath unspeakable malignity in it, since it laid such a load of wrath upon the shoulders of Omnipotence, as made him complain, and sweat, and groan, and die. The good man hath never such a sence of the evil of sin, as when he is awakened by the *signs* and *images* of Christs *Sufferings*, and when he sees it writ in *Characters* of *Bloud*. Besides, the *baseness* and *ingratitude* of Sin is made evident in all the representations of the Divine Love, which we have at the Lords Table; We see *there*, that it is an abuse of the greatest, and most tender Goodness; and there is nothing that more affects ingenuous Souls, than the sence of such

such unworthiness, and this will beget the *liveliest*, and most *kindly* sorrow. *They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn. Zech.* 12. 10. The *tenderest* grief ariseth from the apprehension of *abused Goodness*; And the more ingenuous Spirits are sooner brought to be troubled for their sins, by a sence of *Mercy*, than of Terrors. Now there is nothing that gives a truer, or greater representation of Divine Grace and Kindness than the Holy Sacrament, and therefore *this* is a very effectual means to beget and increase a *penitential sence*, and sorrow for sin. And upon this

(2) Follows *Confession*, which is one expression of *these*. The apprehension of an Angry Majesty drives a sinner to desperation, and prevents his Confessions. When the Lord ask'd the man in the Gospel with some severity, *How camest thou hither, not having a wedding garment*, he was *speechless*.

Terrours beget stupifying fea which stops the mouth, and damm up all the passages to and from th Soul; whereas the discoveries o goodness and mercy, open the heart, and melt the Seal upon th lipps; They invite supplications and beget Confessions; and there fore the *Sacrament* which is a *me morial* of the greatest, sweetest, and freest mercy, tends in the nature of it to the producing humble con fessions, and acknowledgments: and it doth it likewise.

(3) As to the *Aversation* of *Re pentance* by the same way. The Top and perfection, of Repentance is, to *turn* from our *evil ways*. God invites his people to *this*, by the Argument that is most powerfully pres d upon us in the Sacrament, namely, *That* of his *pardoning mer cy*, and kindness. *Return thou backsliding Israel— and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you. Jer.* 3. 12. His readiness to pardon is the great motive to return, and the

he *Sacrament* is the *Seal* of the *Covenant* of *pardon*. Deſpair of Mercy keeps men on in a ſinful courſe. *Thou ſayſt there is no hope*, ſay they in the Prophet *Jerem.* 2. 25. They thought their caſe deſperate, and it follows, *I have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go.* The Devils perſiſt irreclaimably in their hatred of God and Goodneſs, becauſe the unalterable Sentence is paſt upon them; And if men come once to quit their hopes of happineſs, they will alſo in a ſhort time quit the thoughts of God and Virtue, and give themſelves up to the ſwinge of their appetites and inclinations. Whereas on the other ſide, *Hope* is the great incouragement and ſpring of endeavour, and where *this* is enlivened by a *full* and *quick* ſence of pardoning goodneſs, that Soul will feel a *mighty Motive* to reform and turn from ſin. Now the *Sacrament* is the *Seal* of *that Covenant* which aſſures us of Grace, and

pardon, and the firmest ground of our best hopes, and most glorious expectations. Thus the Grace of *Repentance* receives increase in *all* its *exercises*, from this Divine Institution; and so doth

(3) That other most excellent Grace, *Love*, both as it relates 1. to God, and 2. to our Neighbour. (1) In the Holy Sacrament the Mysteries of Divine Love are unfolded in all their circumstances of wonder. There we see *pardoning*, *redeeming*, *bleeding*, *dying* Love, Love, suffering for all our sakes; and Love, procuring all things for our interests. Love descending to the Grave, and Hell; and Love triumphing over both; Love leading *Captivity captive*, and obtaining *gifts for men*, Light, Life, and a glorious Immortality. *Such* Love, and Love *beyond* what we can say and *beyond* what we can think, is represented at the *Holy Sacrament*; and *this* must needs fire every soul, that is not as cold

as the earth, and as dead as the Grave. Love begets Love, and one flame kindles another. And if we think of this Love, and consider it as we ought when we come to the entertainment of Love, this would excite our affections, and turn our ſouls into holy flames, and ſo our *dead* Powers will *live*, and our *dull* ſleepy affections will *awake* into new ſpirit, and vigour. We ſhall live by Love, and act by Love, till we are received into the neareſt embraces of Love, and ſwallowed up in that immenſe ocean of Love. Now *Love* is the *beſt*, and moſt pleaſing of all our *paſſions*; and *Love* to *God* is the *beſt* and moſt pleaſant of all *Loves*; A *Love* free from thoſe tortures, and diſquiets, that ſhame, and thoſe griefs, that are produced by abſence, and uncertainties, loſs and guilt, when *this paſſion* is placed upon other objects. This Love is the Fountain of Delight; and the ſpring of Action; that ſweetens

tens our troubles, and stirs up our endeavours, that makes duty agreeable, and difficulties easie, that is a *present* Heaven, and the foretast of a *greater*. This also (2) Tends to the encreasing our Love one to another. It is a *Feast of Love* at our *Fathers House*, and our *Lords Table*; The *Guests* are *Brethren*, and professing *Children of Love*. Here are all the engagements to love set before us; The *Love* of our *Lord*, and his express Commandment *Joh.* 13. 34. The *Relations* we stand in to God, and to one another. We cannot well choose but *pity* our Brothers *Infirmities*, and *pardon* each others *faults*, when we see how much God hath pityed our *miseries*, and how graciously he hath *pardoned* our *offences*. Our animosities will be abated, and our thoughts of malice and revenge will dye. Our Indifferences will be kindness, and our kindness Love; when we consider the inexpressible Love of our

com-

common Lord, and the bleſſed effects of that Love; *Reconciliation* made, *Happineſs* procured, and *Sin*, and *Death*, and *Hell* conquer'd: A ſence of *theſe*, will ſwallow up all our little picques, and diſpleaſures, and ſo fill us with the thoughts of Gratitude, and Love, That we ſhall forget our enmities, and embrace our enemies, and ſhed abroad our kindneſs upon all about us, yea and extend it to all the world in *prayers*, and *good wiſhes*. And now, This *Spirit* of *Charity* is a moſt *divine temper*, and a great happineſs: 'Tis a *ſweet*, *ſerene*, and *pleaſant* thing, a reward to it ſelf, if there were no other: Whereas *envy*, and *malice*, and all the degrees of them, are an hell and torment to the Soul, they are great ſins and their own puniſhment; And a right uſe of the holy Sacrament will abate, and remove *theſe*; and therein alſo adminiſter bleſſed and unſpeakable advantages to us.

(4) Our *Hopes* are nobly advanced

ced, and strengthened by this Ordinance. When the good man considers the *Justice* and *Holiness* of *God*, and the *perfection* of his *Law* and then takes a view of his own *sinfulness*, and innumerable *imperfections*; His Spirits fail, and his hope is giving up the Ghost; he sinks into trouble, and *almost* into the regions of despair: Now all the relief that a man can have in such a state is to be drawn from Gods *Covenant* to *pardon sin*, and to accept of *faith*, and *repentance* instead of *perfection*. This is the Tenour of the Gospel, and the foundation of our hopes; and *this Covenant* is *sealed* and assured to us at the *Sacrament*; so that *thence* the *fainting* Soul may derive life, and quickning. And when the drooping Christian comes from seeing God putting his *Seal* to his *pardon*, and to the *promises* made him of eternal Life; His hopes recover, and his spirits return unto him; His Soul leaps for joy, and

nd all his powers are full of content, and pleaſure: And over nd above *this*, God is pleaſed at *uch* times *eſpecially*, to vouchſafe more abundant *manifeſtations* of *himſelf* to the Soul, *ſealing* his love upon it, and giving it ſo much aſſurance as may deliver it from its unreaſonable doubts and ſuſpicions, and make it in part partaker of our Maſters joy. But this will be a particular by it ſelf. Therefore

(5) The *holy Sacrament* is an excellent means to heighten a Chriſtians *Joy* and *Comfort*. For *there* we are in a *ſpecial* exerciſe of our *Graces*, and by *them* are *prepared* for *Divine peace and pleaſure*, That *peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding*, *Phil.* 4. 7. and *this* is ſomething *more* than *that* content that naturally ariſeth upon, and reſults from the Actions of holineſs and vertue; and is ſuperadded by the nearer applications of the Spirit of God to the Soul; This pleaſure and ſatisfaction God

is

is always willing to bestow upon us, but we by our sins indispose our selves for it, and it is not to be given but to *prepared Souls*. And now according to the *greater* or *less degrees* of our *preparations* and exercise of our graces, we shall have *more*, or *less* of this spiritual joy, and satisfaction in our Communions. But besides the joy which is *special*, and *extraordinary*. The Ordinance in its own nature tends to *delight* and *pleasure*. We had raised storms, and tempests by our sins, and provoked him whom we can neither resist, nor avoid; His Countenance was full of dread and terrours, and Death and Hell stood ready for the command to seize upon us: And must it not needs fill those with joy and transport, that were just now in this *dreadful* state, when they shall see the Heavens cleared, and the storms gone; To behold smiles and love in the face of the offended Majesty; to be assured that he is *reconci-*

l. I

ed, and his Arms are open to receive us; That *Hell* and *Death* are *deſtroyed*, and *life* and *happineſs* procured for us? All theſe are ſet before us in the holy Sacrament; and did we uſe it as we ought, our ſouls would be tranſported with joy, and we ſhould have a delightful foretaſt of the happineſs, and triumphs of the bleſſed; and all our Lives would be *Anthems* of *Praiſe* and acclamation to the adorable Author, and procurer of our Bleſſings. And this

(6) Is another happy advantage we derive, or may do, from the holy Sacrament, *viz.* That it heightens and ſpirits our *Gratitude*, and *Praiſes*. Praiſe and acknowledgment of Divine favours, are all the return we can make for them; and we are to offer up theſe Sacrifices for our ſelves, and all the other creatures: But the *commonneſs* of our mercies takes away the *ſence* of them; and we paſs them over with *ſlight*, and *cuſtomary* acknow-

knowledgmeuts; This ordinarily is our course, and 'tis a very disingenuous and ungrateful carriage to the bountiful Author of our beings and blessings: But now at the Holy Sacrament, *Divine favours* are *particularly* and *solemnly* represented, our remembrance awakened and our affections excited; and the devout Soul pours it self forth into holy Eucharist, and thanksgiving. The *heart* is *full*, and the *mouth flows*: All the powers rejoice and rejoycing break forth into Songs of Praise: And so *begin* that blessed imployment, which shall be the work and happiness of Heaven.

Thus we shall receive increase to our *Graces*, and our *Comforts* from the frequent, and due use of the *Holy Sacrament*, and all *other spiritual* advantages are contain'd under *these*, And as *by* these particulars we may *incourage* our selves to our duty, so *in* them likewise we may see how we are to *demean* our

ur ſelves in the diſcharge of it: *hat acts* we are to exerciſe, and *what conſiderations* we may ſtir p our *graces*, inflame our *affecti-s*, and ſtrengthen our *reſoluti-s*.

And now the *Benefits* that I have preſented to incourage and invite ou to the *holy Sacrament* do not on-concern the *thorough*, and *grown hriſtian*, but even *all* that own the rofeſſion of Chriſts Religion, and ave not renounc'd their *bap-ſmal ingagements* by *leudneſs*, nd *impiety*; For ſuch have *ſome egrees* of *Faith*, *Love*, *Repentance*, nd other vertues; But the unhap-ineſs is, that *theſe*, in the moſt, re very low, imperfect and in a egree that will not ſecure their ondition: *Theſe graces* muſt be dvanced to *nobler meaſures*, and to *uch degrees*, as may *prevail* over he *contrary habits*, and *diſpoſitions*; ill the matter comes to *this*, we re under the *Law*, and a *ſpirit* of ondage; in a condition of *impo-tency*

tency, and *weakness*, and not arri
ved to the *glorious Liberty*, an
Power of the *Sons of God: Thi*
all that profess the Christian Fai
and Hopes, ought to aim at, an
indeavour after; and the *Sacrame*
is the most *proper*, and *likely mea*
for the advancing of our imperfe
Graces to that noble height. S
that all professing Christians a
concerned in the duty, and capab
of the benefits. And to all tho
that have *such* thoughts, and *suc*
desires, the *Considerations* I hav
presented will be of moment. Bu
for the rest, that are *careless*, an
unconcerned, *dead* to such *spiritu*
Motives, and *stupidly careless* o
the *duty*, and the *priviledges* tha
attend it; They are *not Christians*
but do as much as in them lyes
to renounce their Religion, and t
put themselves into the condition
of Heathens and professed Infidels
This is that I come next to discourse

After all my persuasions, an
most earnest endeavours, I have
too

no much cauſe to think that ſome mong ou neglect the Holy Ordi- ance not for any *reaſon* that they ave, or can as much as *pretend:* ut from meer *brutiſh ſtupidity*, and *nconcernment*. They *care not for beſe things*. The *motives* of *Reli- ion*, and another world can do *othing* with them; *ſuch conſidera- ions* are not *felt*, but paſt over heir Souls without making any mpreſſions on them. And now s for *ſuch*, I come to ſhew, That hey *diſclaim Chriſt*, and his *Reli- ion*, and are by no means to be eckoned into the number of *Chri- ians*. This I prove by the follow- ng particulars.

Firſt, They renounce a main Article of the *Creed*, *viz.* The *Commmunion* of Saints, their *Communion* with (1) *Chriſt*, and heir Communion with (2) *one nother*. (1.) Chriſt invites us to his Table, and prepares a ſpiritu- l entertainment for us; and in *hat* there is a *ſolemn*, and *ſpecial intercourſe*

intercourse between *him*, and
Church; which on *our part* co
ſiſts in the *exerciſe* of our *Grac*
and on *his*, in the *benefits*, a
bleſſings he beſtows. He invi
us to come and to meet him *th*
to injoy ſpiritual correſpondenc
and communion with him: A
now, *wilfully* to refuſe the in
tation, is to ſignifie our *contempt*
the holy Jeſus, and ſo declare th
we care not for any nearneſs
correſpondence with him. A
ſuch neglectors in effect ſay, th
they love the converſe and comm
nion of their vain, and vitious co
pany; That they can ſpend the
time *pleaſantly* in *their* converſat
on, upon an Ale bench, or pla
of idleneſs, or debauches: But f
Chriſt Jeſus they *like* not *his co*
pany, and care not for any int
macy of acquaintance with hi
This is the direct language of ſuc
practices, and neglects, and wh
kind of *Chriſtians* are *ſuch* as *thes*

(2) They renounce the *Communi*

n of *Saints one among another.* The holy *Sacrament* is the *Feaſt* of *Charity*, and *Chriſtian Love*, and *there* our affections are united to God, and to our brethren. *There* we profeſs to be of *one Body*, *one Society*, and to be all *members one of another.* So that thoſe who neglect and refuſe this holy *Symbol* of Love; break off from the *Society* of *Chriſtians*, and declare they will have nothing to do with them, as far as they are concerned in that name, and relation: That they will not be of the flock, and number that Chriſt calls *his*; but would rather have their lot with the world, and herd of mankind, who are ſtrangers to the *Covenant of Promiſe*, *without hope*, *and without God in the world.* *Eph.* 2. 12. That they value not *their priviledges*, nor care for their *hopes.* This is the meaning of their neglect, and *ſuch* Chriſtians are the wilful refuſers.

(2) They renounce their *Baptiſm.*

This

This is the Sacrament of *entran*
into *Christianity*, and *here ingag*
ments are laid upon us *with*
our knowledg, or consent.
the Sacrament of the Lords Su
per we *solemnly ingage*, and *ta*
those *obligations* upon *our selves.*
we refuse to do *this*, we *withdra*
our *consent* from what was done
our stead; we make our *Baptis*
void, and put our selves into t
state of Infidels, and Heathens. T
Indians were by the *Spaniards* dr
ven to Baptism in droves, like Ca
tel to the water, without know
ing what it meant, or what th
did in it: were *these* Christians b
vertue of such a Baptism? Espec
ally, is there any reason to thin
those of them such, who as soon
they were free, made open d
clarations against it. And are *th*
among us *Christians*, who we
signed with that *Religion* when th
could not *help* it, and *profess* again
it by their actions, and neglects
as soon as they are in *capaci*

o do it? who *diſown* it, when they re *ſolemnly* called to put their *ſeal*, nd to declare their allowance and pprobation? Their *ſureties* inga- ed for them that they ſhould *believe* he Chriſtian *Faith*; *keep* God's *Commandments*, and *renounce* the *World*, the *Fleſh* and the *Devil*: ut ſay *thoſe* by their practiſe, what ad *they* to do to undertake ſuch hings for us? we will ſtand to no uch ingagements: we are call'd n to make this good our ſelves in erſon at the other Sacrament, or y our neglects to declare it void: ut we will not tie our ſelves, or wn any ſuch ingagements on us; e will leave our ſelves at large to lieve what we pleaſe, and to ractiſe what we phancy, and to ratifie and worſhip, as long as we ink fit, the World, the Devil, and e Fleſh, our friends, and deareſt orreſpondents. All this likewiſe plainly ſignified in the neglect the holy Sacrament; and there- e certainly ſuch are no better

Christians than the wild men of *America:* which will further appear if we consider,

(3.) That by it they *deny* the very *profession* of *Christ Jesus*: They will not as much as *claim*, nor *pretend* to him, in any *solemn*, *significant* way. To *say* that we are *Christians*, and now and then to *hear* a *Sermon*, *these* are not profession *enough*: They are but *cold* declarations of our *opinion*; no good significations of our *Faith*. The *right profession* of *Christianity* is made, by our presenting our selves at the Lords Table, and owning our *Faith there*; that is a *solemn* and *publique* confession and acknowledgment. To *hear Sermons* is too often but *curiosity* or *custom*; to *say* we are of the *Christian Religion*, is but a declaring in what way we have been brought up; and meer *education-Faith* is but a *faint*, *unsignifying* thing; It is but *opinion* and a *low degree* of assent. 'Tis true a man may be a *Formalist* and a

Hypocrite

Hypocrite when he comes to the Lords Table, as well as in other lower ſignifications of his Religion. But however, he makes a *profeſſion*, and *that* which is *proper* and *ſolemn*: whereas the *wilfully negligent* refuſe to make any due confeſſion of Chriſt and his Religion. They openly *deny him before men, and ſuch he will deny before his Father which is in heaven*, Mat. 10.33. To *withdraw* from the *profeſſion* of *Chriſtianity* in times of *difficulty* and *perſecution* is a great ſin; but 'tis *ſuch* a one as admits of ſome *extenuation* from the *frailty* of *humane nature*, and the *temptations* of *fear* and *ſelf-love*; But to *deny* the *profeſſion* of Chriſt in times of *Liberty* and *incouragement*, this is an *affront* to the *Holy Jeſus*, for which there is no *ſhadow* of *excuſe*, and muſt ariſe from *contempt*, and a confeſt *neglect* of him. *Such* perſons publiſh to the world, that they own *nothing* of *Religion*; but count it a diſparagement to be thought

any way concern'd for it. And so are by no means to be accounted Christians. Further,

(4.) Their refusal and neglect is a quitting and renouncing the *whole Covenant* that God hath made with sinners in his Son. The *Covenant* on *Gods part* offers *Grace* and *Glory*; and on *ours*, it binds to *Faith* and *sincere obedience*. We are called to the Sacrament to see God *confirming* what he hath promised, and assuring us to make good what concerns *him*: On the otherside, we are to present our selves *there*, to profess our readiness and resolution, to perform *our part*, to keep the terms to which we are ingaged, and upon which we expect the promised blessings. Now if we wilfully refuse this *Confirmation*, we withdraw our selves from the *Covenant*, and declare that Grace and Glory are things that we neither *care for* nor *expect*; and that we will not tie our selves to any *faith* or *homage*; but would be as free as we

we can, to follow the *Devil* and our *Lusts*: and so are far off from being *Christians*.

CHAP. IV.

I Have thus briefly shewn you what is *signified* and *implyed* in the *neglect* of the *Holy Sacrament*. Many of you that are guilty of *this* sin, would I suppose be loath *openly*, and in *words*, to *renounce* Christ and his Religion, and yet while you continue in this obstinate, dangerous neglect, you *do it*, as *fully* as if your tongues declared against that name and profession. And I think when any such as *these* turn *Papists*, *Turks*, or *Jews*, they do but change to *some* shew of Religion, from *none* at all. So that it is no *real* disparagement, or loss to our Church, when those Infidels declare in *words*, what before they sufficiently signified by their *prac-*

ctice. *They go out from us, because they were never of us*, 1 *John* 2. 19. They do not *change* their *Religion*, for they had never *any* before which they might exchange.

This, Sirs, in serious truth, is the condition of *those* that *wilfully* refuse, and neglect the Duty of *Holy Communion*: And methinks it should make *such* tremble to consider, that they live in a *profest* and *impudent* contempt of God. You pity *Heathens*, and ignorant *Americans*; but there is work enough for your pity at home, and *their* condition certainly is not worse, than the condition of those careless negligent sinners among our selves. Yea, the Apostle tells us, That 'tis *better never to have known the way of truth, than after we have known it to turn away from the Holy Commandment*, 2 Pet. 2. 21. and our Saviour saith, *It shall be more tolerable for the dark Tyre and Sidon*, at judgment, than for the *inlightned Capernaum* and *Bethsaida*, *Matt.* 11. 22.

We

We think *their* condition dreadful that ſay, *there is no God*, and no doubt it is *ſo*: And certainly *their* ſtate is not *leſs* deplorable; That acknowledge *there is a God*, but *defie* him, and carry the matter *ſo*, as if in good *earneſt* there were *no ſuch being*. To live at large without the ſerious profeſſion of *ſome Religion*, is *brutiſh*, and *unnatural*; And thoſe *Savages* that do *ſo*, deſerve not to continue in the ſocieties of *men*, but are fitter to range among the wild beaſts of the woods. And *ſuch* are thoſe among us, that never make any ſolemn profeſſion of *any Religion*, by *any act* of their *own*. They have *no* Religion, but *that* of their *Climate*, which they neither underſtand, nor mind; they are *Chriſtians* by the *Chriſtianity* of *others* (*viz.* the *general profeſſion* of their *Country*) or they are *none* at all; and if they live and die in *this* condition, *wild men* and *Canibals* will at the laſt be in a *better* ſtate than *they*.

And now, Sirs, *Reason* for the *carelesness* and *dangerous neglect*, I am sure you have none; Nor of the sort I am now dealing with, pretend *Scruples* of *Conscience*: But yet some *Excuses* there are, which you *know* are but *vain*, that you use upon occasion to take off the edge of reproof, and to seem to justifie your selves by them in the sight of men.

Thus they that were invited to the *Supper* in the *Parable*, *Luke* 14. 18. made *excuses*; One had *bought ground* and he must *see* it; a second, had *bought Oxen*, and he must *try them*; and a third, had *married a Wife*, and *could not come*. None of these *pretences* had any good reason in them; they were *some thing to say*, and had a little *colour*, but they were not the *causes* of their not coming to the *Supper*. No, the *true ground* was their *contempt* of the *Master*, and his *Invitation*: and therefore *Matt.* 22. 3. 'tis said, They *would not* come;

Their

Their *excuſes* were looked on, as *flat denyals*, and the reaſon is given after: It was not their *Ground*, nor their *Oxen*, nor their *Marriage*; but their *diſeſteem* of the Lord, and his Feaſt, *They made light of it*, v 5. But though theſe excuſes were not *good*, yet they had ſomething *ſpecious* in them: 'Twas *buſineſs*, and *conſiderable* occaſions that were alledg'd: and *ſuch* affairs they *really* had, for 'tis ſaid in St. *Matthew*, that *that they went their way, one to his Farm*, and *another to his Merchandiſe*; ſo that there was *ſome thing true* in their *pleas*, though the *main thing* for which they were brought was *falſe*. But now, if they had ſent word, that the *Lord's houſe* was ſo *far off*, that they were not *able* to go to it, though really it were within ſome few furlongs of their remoteſt dwellings, and not further than the *Markets*, which they conſtantly frequented: There had been more *folly* in *this* excuſe. If they had ſaid, that there was not *room* for

them all in the *Lord's House*, when they knew, that it was never *full* on *such* occasions, and that a great part of those that were invited, would not come, so that they were sure to find too many empty places; the excuse would have been interpreted as a *mockery*, and a *scoff* at the invitation. If they had told the Messengers, that they would not come, except they had each of them a *Chair* and *Cushion* provided for him, and might sit in *state* and *ease* at the Entertainment, this had been *greater* arrogance than appears in *those* Refusers. If they had sent the Lord word, that they would not feast with him, at *such*, or *such* of his Houses, that were *appointed* and were most *convenient* for their reception; but they would have it *here*, or *there*; at *home*, and *next* door; in places much less fit: *This* would have been a very *humersome* and very *rude* answer to the Invitation. If further they had said, that

that the Feaſt began to *ſoon*, and that they could not *riſe ſo early*, though the Sun was up many hours before, and they were abroad *every day earlier* about their *other* buſineſs; This alſo had been an *affront* to the *Maſter*, and a *contempt* to his *kindneſs*. But if theſe *ſurly*, *unworthy* people ſhould have been *humour'd* in *all particulars*, and things ſhould have been *ſo* managed, as to have avoided all *theſe* pretences: And yet if after *ſuch* condeſcention they ſhould have refuſed, they had *confuted themſelves*, and given the *lye* to their *excuſes*: But, if notwithſtanding all *this*, they ſhould have cried out that they were *periſhing* for *want* of *bread*; and clamour'd, and complain'd heavily that proviſion was not made for them; what could have been ſaid to ſuch an *impudent*, *brazen'd* ſort of *Hypocrites*?

Sirs, there are *ſome* among you that underſtand what I mean: I ſpeak not thus out of *ill will* to upbraid

upbraid any of you, but I ought to *mind* you, and to endeavour to *convince* you of your sins. What ever *colours* the *guilty* may set upon their neglects, and contempts of *Holy* Ordinances, before *men*, *God* will not be *deceiv'd*, or *mock'd*; there is no putting *tricks* upon him. If you *will* not be *perswaded* to your duty, he *knows* the *reason*, and 'tis in *vain* to make *false flourishes*, and *excuses*. Yea, some mens *pretences* are so *openly untrue*, and *grosse*, that they cannot as much as hope to *deceive men* by them. Every one *sees* the *falsehood*, and *lying* of their allegations; all their *actions* proclaim that they do not themselves *believe*, or *mean* any thing that they *say*; and yet they have the *prodigious impudence* to *lye* on in the face of *God*, and *conscience*, and *men*. So *seared*, and *hardned* are some in their *perverseness* and *hypocrisie*, and act at *that rate*, as if it were a *play-game*, and *sport* of wit to shew how *many* a *lyes* they had

to

to evade their duty, with ſome *ſhew* of reaſon. Sirs, when this *vile ſort* of evil men have the forehead to *pretend Religion*, they become the moſt *miſchievous miſcreants* upon earth; and the *fitteſt* Inſtruments that Sathan can deſire or uſe for the affairs of his Kingdom. But no more of them now.

Friends, I am exceeding troubled to ſee how *undutiful* to *God*, and how *unkind* to *themſelves*, how *fooliſh* and *unreaſonable* many men are, when they ſeek for *little occaſions* to pretend, as *reaſons* againſt the *greateſt* and moſt *important* Duties; when *that* which would *excuſe nothing elſe*, ſhall *excuſe* them unto *God* for a *neglect* of his *worſhip*, in the *greateſt* Inſtances of it: An *aking finger*, a few Drops of *rain*, the *cold Air*, a Fit of *Drowſineſs*, an impertinent *viſit*, or *ſuch* like trifles, are enough to be pleaded for *abſence* from the Houſe of God, and Holy Communion with him. My wife was not at home, or ſhe

was

was buisie, my Childs head aked, or I had friends to dine with me, therefore I *could not* be at the *Sacrament*. Therefore I *could not*! For shame false man! offer *such* excuses to thy *Master*, or thy *Prince*, when he commands, and expects thine attendance, see how he will take them from thee: yea offer *such* but to thine *equal*, that waits for thee on affairs of moment, and try how kindly he will receive the disappointment on such grounds. Dost thou use to say, I *could not* go out to *market* to buy necessaries, because 'twas *cold weather*; I *could* not go to *Dinner* to my kind Neighbour next door, that invited me, because I had a *corn* upon my great Toe? Are such pretences too *trifling* to be used on such *ordinary* occasions, and are they *enough* for the *greatest*? will they serve to excuse thy neglect of *feeding* thy soul with the *bread* of life, and thy making provision for eternity? Will they answer for thy

thy not waiting on thy Lord, the Lord of Life and Glory, when he invited thee to the Feaſt of Love, at the Houſe of Banquets? What thoughts haſt thou of the *priveledges* of the *Goſpel*, the *Communion* of *Saints*, the *peace* of *Conſcience*, the *joyes* of the *Holy Ghoſt*, the *foretaſts* of *Glory*; what, I ſay, doſt thou think of *theſe*, if they have not *ſo much power* with thee as the moſt *acknowledged* trifles? With how much *leſs* reſpect and devotion doſt thou *ſerve God*, than wicked men do the *Devil* and their *Luſts?* When *they* invite to *jolly meetings* and *communion* in *debauchery* and *beaſtial madneſs*, do the *Blades* uſe to make *ſuch* excuſes? Are they diverted and kept off from their *bruitiſh* ſatisfactions by *ſuch Nothings?* certainly they could not *ſo* excuſe themſelves to their *luſts* and *vile Companions*. And do you pretend to be *worſhippers* of the *God* of *Heaven*, and worſhippers of the *beſt* and *pureſt* ſort, to be *Chriſtians*,

stians, and expectants of *eternal glories* as *rewards* of your services; and do you *thus* serve your Maker; *now* and *then* when the humour takes you, when the *Devil* hath *no business* for you, and you have *nothing else* to do? Are you not ashamed to confess that *Religion* hath so *little* power with you, and that every thing can *do more* with you, than your *duty* to *God*, and the interest of your souls? Do you *thus work out your salvation?* Do you *thus seek a Kingdom*, a *heavenly Kingdom*, an *everlasting Kingdom?* Is *this* the *work* and *patience* of the *Gospel?* Is *this running*, and *striving*, and *fighting*, and *giving diligence?* Is *this cutting of right hands*, and *plucking out right eyes?* Is *this forsaking all* and *following Christ?* If there be any *reason*, if there be any *shame*, if there be any *Conscience*, if there be any *sense* of *God* and *Religion* in you, let not *small* matters keep you from *this* your greatest duty and concern:

Make

Make no more *ſuch vain* and *ſelf-condemning Apologies*. I know not whether it were not better for you once for all, to ſay you are *no Chriſtians*; than to inſiſt on ſuch *ſhameleſs* pretenſions for your neglects of *Chriſt* and his appointments. I add no more on this head now; I pray God you may lay to heart what I have ſaid.

CHAP. V.

I Paſs now to diſcourſe with the *other* ſort of *Refuſers*; viz.

(2) *Thoſe* that ſtand off upon the ſcore of *miſtakes* of *Conſcience*. In applying my ſelf to *them*, I ſhall conſider the moſt weighty *objections* that carry any *colour* of *conſcience* with them. And though I know many pretend *ſcruples* of *this ſort*, when in *earneſt they* are *not* the *reaſons* of their neglects; yet becauſe they *are ſo* to *ſome*, I ſhall take them

to

to account. They are of tw
sorts,

(1.) Such as hinder men on
sometimes, and in *part*.

(2.) Such as *wholly* obstr
their *Communion*, and are preten
ed as grounds, why they cann
partake with us at *any* time.

Of the *first* kind are *these* th
follow; *viz.*

(1) We hear sometimes, [
would not have neglected the ho
Sacrament, *but I was not* in *chari*
such, or such a person hath abu
me, and I was at odds with hi
so that I durst not come.]

To this I say, That in *such*
occasion, thou art *seriously*, and i
partially to consider, whether t
displeasure were *just*, or *unj*
upon the determining of *this* w
depend the state of the case. If

(1) Thy displeasure were *j*
and thy Neighbour hath done th
wrong, and *persists* in it without
pentance, or *reparation*; 'tis no
charitableness to be *out* with hi

r think amiſs of him. In *ſuch* a aſe, thy *anger* is no *ſin*, ſo long as keeps it ſelf within *juſt bounds*. *e angry, and ſin not*, ſaith the A- oſtle, *Eph.*4.26. *they may be parted.* nd what is *no ſin* cannot *unfit* us or the *holy Communion*. For *that* Ordinance doth not oblige us to be *conciled* in our thoughts to *wick-d*, and *injurious* men, while they *npenitently* continue *ſuch* : It will ndeed require us not to *revenge* ur ſelves on them, to do them *rong*, or to deſire their *ruine*, or s much as *hurt*; but *not* to have *ind* and good thoughts of them hile they *continue obſtinate* in their *ins*, and *injuſtice* : *otherwiſe* it were n the *power* of every wicked perſon o *hinder* the good man from the *Sacrament*, when he pleaſed. On uch an occaſion (I ſay) we may be *nocently angry*, and not *only pity* he *injurious* man, which many imes is but a *proud*, though more *laufible* word to diſguiſe anger by. nd the man that is but *thus juſtly* diſplea-

pleaſed with an offendor again God, and himſelf, is not *indiſpo* for the *Sacrament* thereby. If th be your caſe at any time, you oug not to permit the injury of anoth to do you *ſo much more*, as to ke you from your attendance on Chr at his *Feaſt* of *Love*.

But (2) If upon *examination* ye have found, that your *anger*, an diſpleaſure was *unjuſt*; then t *ſin*, and the *wrong* was on yo part, and you ought to *repent* of i and *reſolve* againſt it, as a *prepar tion* for the holy Sacrament. A if you *do ſo*, the *Sacrament* will a *proper means* to your end; *The* you will find *conſiderations*, an *helps* for the *cooling* of the *heats* your *paſſion*; and for the allayi the *boylings* of your *rage*, and *a moſity*: I ſay, if you are convinc in your conſcience, that your *wra* is *undeſerved*, you ought to *repe* and if you *do ſo*, you ought to u the *Holy Sacrament* for the *confi mation* of your *repentance*.

So that the ſcruple of *not* being in *charity* cannot juſtly keep any from the Sacrament, but *thoſe* that know they hate their brother without a cauſe, and are reſolv'd to perſiſt in that hatred; *ſuch* as will not be reconciled to one that hath done them wrong, though he repents, and endeavours reparation: and *ſuch*, in effect, *renounce* Chriſt, and declare that they expect no benefit from his *merit*, or *mediation* for the obtaining *pardon* for themſelves. If this be your condition, you may well be *afraid* to come to the Holy Sacrament; and you may as well tremble to pray, *Forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.* For this is directly *praying* againſt your ſelves. I hope it is not *thus* with any of you that make this exception.

But your neighbour you think is an *evil* man, hath done you *injury*, and not *askt* your *pardon*, or ſought your *amends*; you are there-

fore

fore displeased with him, and fee much anger in your mind again him; but yet are very *ready* to *fo give* him upon his *acknowledgmen* and *desire* of *forgiveness*. If it be a ter *this* manner with you, yo ought not to *abstain* from the *Sa crament* for *this* reason; but ra ther to address your selves to i to *provide* and *pray* that your j anger may not grow into *malic* and rage; that you may not b provoked to repay your eneny o injury for another, but that by th due use of those holy mysteries yo may be *more inclined* to *forgiveness* when he shall be *fit* for it. This think is sufficient for *that* doubt.

(II) Some plead; [*I have much business faln upon me, that have not time to prepare my self, an therefore I cannot come*]

In *Answer* to *this*, I shall s *something* that concerns [1] *Business* and something [2] that concern *Preparation*.

(1) As to **Business**. Doth you

Business

Buſineſs afford you time to *eat*, and *drink*, and *ſleep*, and *none* to fit your ſouls for *ſpiritual entertainments*, and *converſe* with *God?*

(2) Have you any *greater* have you any *better* buſineſs, than to prepare your ſelves to *remember* the *Love* of your *dear Lord*, to *meet* with him, to *renew* your *Covenant* with *God*, and to receive pledges of his *pardon*, and his *love?* Do you not reckon, that *this* is *buſineſs*; and the moſt *important* and *neceſſary* buſineſs; and ſhall the *greater* matters give place to the *leſs?*

(3) Is not *much* of the *buſineſs* that *hinders*, *needleſs?* have you not *voluntarily* involv'd your ſelf in *more* affairs than it was *neceſſary* you *ſhould*, or than your ſtate or ſtation in the world requir'd? might not *ſome* of it have been *put off* to ſome *other* time; or might not the *time* that you ſpend in *impertinencies* be imployed in *ſome* of that buſineſs?

Ask

Ask your Consciences these questions; and know, that what ever business you take upon you *more* than is consistent with your duty to God, and to your souls, *that business* is *your sin*. But if your business were not *voluntary*, but thrown on you by *Providence*; the *doing* such *necessary* business is *Gods work*; and while you do it in his *fear*, and with an eye to his *glory*, you are doing somewhat that is a *preparation* for the Holy Sacrament, or at least *that* which doth not by any means *indispose* you for it. And hence I pass to the Answers that concern

II. Preparation. As to this take these two things.

(1) There are *Preparations* required to *Prayer* and *Hearing*, as well as to the *Sacrament*; *Meditation* is the Preparation for *Prayer*, and *Prayer* the Preparation for *Hearing*; and I hope that notwithstanding your business you perform *these* duties: If *not*, you are to *repent* speedily of your neglecte

and,

and to take the *first* opportunity of the Sacrament, *there* to *confess* your *sin*, to declare your *repentance* and *resolutions* of *amendment*; to beg *pardon* for what you have *omitted*, and *grace* to *assist* you in what you *resolve*. But if you *have perform'd those holy services*, then I say

(2) That *those performances* joyned with *faith* and *repentance* are *preparation* for the Holy Communion. For when we *hear*, and when we *pray*, we do the *same* thing that we do at the *Sacrament*, though *not* with *that solemnity*; we *remember* Christ when we *hear*, and we do the same, and renew our *Covenant* with God when we *pray*, (in which two I have told you the nature of the Ordinance consists;) so that these acts are *dispositions* and *preparations* for *that* which is the more *solemn* performance. A *good life* in the discharge of our duties towards God and man, is an *habitual* and *constant preparation* for the *Sacrament*; and a *true Christian*

is alwayes *ready* and *prepared* to *remember Christ*, and to *confirm* the *Covenant* whereby he is a Christian. It is indeed very fit, that we should take some time before we approach the Lords Table, to call together into our thoughts the several great instances of the love of our dear Saviour, which we are to *remember there*; what *particular sins* we have to *confess*, and to *resolve* and *covenant* against; what *graces* we *want* and are more especially to *implore*. These things we should do, but they are not works that will require much labour or time, if we have been constant in the other *preparatory* duties of *Meditation*, *Prayer*, and *Hearing*; for they do *habituate such* thoughts and resolutions to the souls of good men. But if thy case be *such*, that thou hast been an *evil* man, and *negligent* of a spiritual duty; but art now *sensible* of thy sin, and *desirous* to *reform* that *sense* and *those desires* of amendment (if they are *sincere*, and if thou

under

underſtandeſt the *nature* of the *Sacrament*, and God's *Covenant* that is ſealed by it) are thy *preparations*. The *more time* thou takeſt, and the *more prayers* and *thoughts* thou imployeſt with other means, to make the *ſenſe* of ſin *deep*, and the *deſires* of reformation *intenſe* and *great*; the *more* thou art *prepared*, and the better things are like to ſucceed with thee: But if thy *preparations* are of a *lower*, and more imperfect degree, (if of the *true* kind) thou oughteſt *not therefore to abſtain*; God will *pardon* thy *infirmities*, and *accept* of thy *ſincerity*, and *ſtrengthen* thee *ſo*, that thou ſhalt be *better prepared* againſt *another opportunity*, if thou art not wanting to thy ſelf. But as to *this* I may have occaſion to ſpeak more under the next Head, to which I now come:

Viz. (II) To conſider the *Scruples* of *Conſcience* that keep ſome *off wholly* from *publick Communions*. They are either of *ſuch* as refrain becauſe (1) they think *themſelves*

unworthy, or (2) of thoſe that do it becauſe they think *others unworthy*, or (3) of ſuch as refuſe on the opinion, that the *way* of *adminiſtration* is *unworthy*. Moſt of the conſiderable, and uſual doubts will fall under one or other of *theſe*. I begin with thoſe of the *firſt* ſort.

(1) We would come to the Holy Communion, but alas we are not *worthy* of ſo great an honour and priviledge; and we are afraid to come, becauſe we hear that *he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks his own damnation.*]

To *this*, propoſed thus in the general, I anſwer (1) we are alſo *unworthy* of *common* mercies, of *meat* and *drink* and *raiment*; and of the more uſual *ſpiritual* mercies, that God ſhould *ſpeak* unto us, or that *we* ſhould be permitted to *ſpeak* unto *him*; ſhall we therefore *ſtarve* our ſelves, and go *naked*? ſhall we therefore refuſe to *hear*, and *pray*? In the *Sacrament* there is *ſomething* of *duty*, and *ſomething* of

of *priviledge*; when we are commanded to do a duty *reasonable* and *just*, shall we refuse because we are *unworthy?* when we are invited unto a benefit *great* and *free*, and *necessary*, shall we resist it because we are not *worthy?* To do thus is to render our selves *more undeserving*. When God offers favours, we *may* and *ought* to accept, though we are unworthy of them.

(2) All men are unworthy in the sense of the Law. *Every man in his best estate is altogether vanity*, Psal. 39. 5. *We are all an unclean thing, and our righteousness is as filthy rags*, Isa. 64. 6. The meaning is, all men are *sinners*, and their *best services* are *imperfect* and *polluted*. There is none *righteous*, no not one, according to the strictness and severity of the Law, which required unsinning obedience. *This unworthiness* then is *not* a *reason* why thou shouldst refrain; yea

(3) If thou art *sensible* of this thine *unworthiness*, and desirous to

be made *more worthy*, thou oughteſt for *that reaſon* to come. 'Tis *ſuch* that Chriſt invites: *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you reſt*, Matt. 11. 28. *He came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance*, Matt. 9. 13. *Ho every man that thirſteth come* —— Iſa. 55. 1. *The Spirit and the Bride ſay come, and let him that is athirſt come*, — Rev. 22. 17. *Senſe* of *ſpiritual wants*, and *deſire* of *ſpiritual ſupplies* is part of *Goſpel-worthineſs*; and *that* which gives a *right* to the *Sacrament*. Thy being an *unworthy* ſinner, is not a reaſon why thou ſhouldſt refrain, except thou art *obſtinately reſolv'd* to *continue ſo*. The *Beggar* is never the more *unworthy* of an *alms* becauſe he is in *rags*, and great *miſery*; nor the *ſick man* the *more unworthy* of the *care* and *pains* of a *Phyſician*, becauſe his diſeaſe is *great* and *violent* upon him. If indeed the Beggar *loves* and *chooſeth want*, and ſcorns *charity*; If the *Patient hates* and *reſiſts*

ſists the *Phyſician* and his *applications*; in ſuch a caſe the one is unworthy of *relief*, and the other of the *means* of *health*. If this be thy caſe in *ſpirituals*, thou art *unworthy*; and till thou art of another temper, I would not perſwade thy coming. But if on the other hand, thou art *ſenſible* of thy *ſins*, and *deſirous* of *pardon* and *grace* to reform, thou haſt the *qualification* that renders thee one that *may* and *ought* to *come*: and thou art *worthy*, as a *Beggar* is of an *alms*, or the *ſick* of *phyſick*; that is, thou *wanteſt* it, and Chriſt invites thee to come, to receive *ſupplies* ſutable to thy *wants*. So that if it be *thus* with thee, the ſentence of the Apoſtle pronounced on him that *eats* and *drinks unworthily* will not concern thee.

But the doubter preſſeth the matter more *particularly*; *Knowledge*, *Faith*, and *Repentance* are *neceſſary* to *this worthineſs*: But I have *no knowledge*; I *cannot believe*; I *cannot repent*; and therefore am

not worthy.]

I shall speak to these *distinctly*, and apart.

As to what concerns (1) **Knowledge** I propose *these* things.

(1) Perhaps thou art mistaken in the *degrees* of *Knowledge* that are necessary. It is *not necessary* that thou shouldst have knowledge in *deep* and *controversal* points, no, nor yet in many *doctrinal opinions* about *Religion*, that are *less speculative*, and *nice*: It is not necessary that thou shouldest be acquainted with the *disputed* matters about the *Sacrament*, or be able to discourse largely upon the subject. No, *Necessary knowledge is in few things*, and *those practical*. If therefore thou art instructed in the main *plain* points of *Christian* Doctrine, and in the *great rules* of *Christian* Life; If thou understandest the *Sacrament* to be a *Remembrance* of Christ, and a *confirming* our *Covenant* with *God*; and knowest those *easie* things I have before set down about

about it: There is no reaſon then why thou ſhouldſt plead *ignorance* in barr to thy *duty* and *priviledge*. But

(2) If thou art *really ignorant* in thoſe *plain* things; thy *ignorance* is *inexcuſable*; 'tis a great *ſin*, and an argument of *prodigious careleſneſs* and *neglect*. For no one can *want capacity* to know things ſo *eaſie*, and no one can want *opportunity* to know things ſo *common*, and no one can plead *excuſe* for not endeavouring to know things ſo *neceſſary*. If *this* then be thy caſe, repent of thy ſtupidity and careleſneſs that occaſioned thy ignorance, and apply thy ſelf preſently to thy *ſpiritual Guide*, or ſome honeſt knowing Neighbour to inſtruct thee in thoſe great and neceſſary matters. Be afraid and aſhamed to live a day longer in ſuch dangerous darkneſs amidſt ſo much clear light: And till thou haſt got out of this ſtate of wilful blindneſs, meddle not with holy myſteries. But *this*,

I hope, is the condition but of very few of you: Thoſe that make the objection are moſtly ſuch as do it upon the *former* miſtake, which I have endeavoured to rectifie.

(II.) Want of Faith is pleaded. And to this ſcruple I ſay

(1.) Perhaps thou art *out*, and haſt been *mis-taught* in the Doctrine of *Faith*. It may be thou takeſt *Faith* to be an *aſſurance* of ſalvation; or ſuppoſeſt that it requires thy aſſent to *many* Principles, and *ſuch* as are *unreaſonable*, or *doubtful*; or perhaps thy mind hath been *confounded* by *phraſes*, and *various*, *metaphorical* and *dark* repreſentations of Faith; ſo that thou doſt not as much as know *what it is*, or *wherein it conſiſts*. Theſe all have been, and often are the caſes of many wel-diſpoſed Chriſtians. The good man is not abſolutely *aſſured* of his ſalvation; or he *doubts* ſometimes of many *doctrines* and *opinions* that he hath been taught to believe as *Fundamentals*,

mentals, or his understanding is *confused* by variety of *odd* notions; and therefore he thinks he hath *not Faith*, and dares not approach the *Holy Table*. If any of these be thy condition, rectify thy thoughts; and thou wilt be rid of thy vain fears: Consider the matter *freely*; look on it in the light of *Scripture* and *reason*, and thou wilt find, that *those conceits* about *Faith* were *groundless*. Lay this down for certain, that *the plainest and most obvious account of it is truest*; For God would not make *that* the great condition of the Gospel, which is *difficult* to understand.

Now the *plain*, *scriptural*, *rational* Notion is *this*, *Faith* in the *general* is the *belief* of a *Proposition affirmed*; *Divine Faith*, the belief of something upon a *Divine Testimony*; *Gospel-saving Faith* is *such* a *belief* of *Divine Testimony*, as hath influence upon the *heart* and *practice*, and conforms them unto it. If now we believe *other Testimonies*, but not

that

that which God hath given us *by*, and *of* his *Son*, our *Faith* is meerly *humane*, and we have nothing to do with the *Holy* Sacrament. If we *believe* the Revelations of God in the *Gospel*, but *that belief* hath not yet had *such power* upon our *affections* and *conversations* as it ought and as we desire: In *this* case we *may*, and 'tis our *duty*, to come to the Lords Table, to profess *that degree* of *Faith* which we *have*, and to *pray* for *more*; that it may be made *so strong* and *lively* as to *transform* our hearts, and all our powers into the *likeness* of it, and into *his likeness* who is the *Author* and *finisher of our Faith*. And finally, if our *Faith* hath *already* had *this effect* upon us, we are to come to the Sacrament for *further confirmation* of it. This is the short and plain account of the matter; and if I should run it out into further discourse, this part would be disproportioned to the rest. If my brevity leave any of you unsatisfied

fied in *this*, or any other thing belonging to my ſubject, I am at hand, willing and ready to give you further ſatisfaction. But

(2) It may be the *weakneſs* and *imperfection* of thy Faith makes thee think thou haſt *none*. In this caſe ask thy ſelf the queſtion. Do I think that Chriſt *Jeſus* was an *Impoſtor*, and that the *Goſpel* is a *Fable?* Thou *ſtartleſt*, and *abhorreſt theſe* thoughts: Hence thou mayſt be aſſured that thou haſt *ſome degree* of *Faith*. But *that* (it may be) is very *ſmall* and *low*: Be *that* the caſe; Ask thy ſelf then again, whether thou haſt any *deſire* that thy *weak* Faith ſhould be *ſtrengthened*, and thy *imperfect* Faith ſhould be *improved* to greater and nobler meaſures? If thou art a perſon fit to be dealt with under this Head of *Conſcience*, it is *thus* with thee: thou art *ſorry* for *this imperfection*, and *deſirous* of *growth* and *improvement*: And if *ſo*, apply thy ſelf to the Holy Sacrament, as to the

the *proper means* of *growth*, and *remedy* of thy *imperfections*. *Here* thy Faith will be *exercised*, and by exercise it will be felt; so that thy doubts, whether thou hast any, or no, will be cleared off experience will assure thee. And how thy Faith will by the use of this Ordonance be quickned and advanced, I have shewn already. Thus to the Objection from the supposed want of Faith. But

(III) The good man thinks that he wants **Repentance** too: He cannot *repent* he saith, and therefore is not *worthy*. In answer, I take notice that

In Repentance two things are considerable, *viz.* 1 *Sorrow* for sin, and 2 *Turning* from it to a life of Holiness and Vertue.

(1) It may be thy *sorrow* is not so *intense* and *great* as thou thinkst is fit and suitable to such an occasion: Thou canst not weep and grieve *so much* for thy sin as the evils of it requires, and yet thou mayst

mayſt not wholly want the grace of Repentance. *All* indeed are *ſinners*, and *all* muſt *repent* : But men are *ſinners* in *different* meaſures, and degrees of guilt; and their ſorrow and humiliations will likewiſe be *different*. *Deeper* Convictions and *greater* agonies and pangs of ſorrow may be expected from them whoſe ſins have been *capital* and *notorious*, than from thoſe others whoſe lives have been more *civil*, and leſs tainted with *ranting* enormities. It may be then, thy Education hath been ſober, & thy inclinations not bent towards the groſſer vices; thou haſt not committed any *horrid* crimes, or *ſuch* ſins as look *gaſtly* in the conſcience; and conſequently thy Converſion hath not thoſe *terrours*, aud that *dread* in it, thoſe melting ſorrows, and violent expreſſions of grief that thou obſerveſt in ſome others. Though it be *thus*, thou haſt no reaſon to be diſcouraged, if thy ſorrw be *ſo much* as to engage thee to *humble* thy

thy ſelf before God, ſincerely to beg *grace* and *forgiveneſs*, and to obtain from thee *hatred* of thy ſins, and reſolutions againſt them; *that ſorrow* of thine is *godly ſorrow*, and part of true *repentance*, though it have not the greateſt *degrees* of *vehemence*: *Theſe* may be wanting on an other account alſo in them that are truly penitent; their *tempers* may be more *cold*, and their *paſſions calmer*, than others are; and on this ſcore their *reſentments* leſs *notable*, and the *expreſſions* of them leſs *eager*: So that *violences* in *ſorrow* are not alwayes *arguments* of *true repentance*, nor the *abſence* of them a *ſign* of *impenitency* and *hardneſs*. If thou art *ſo* ſenſible of ſin as to *deſire* and *endeavour* to overcome and forſake it, thou art a *penitent* in part, and thou oughteſt to come to the Sacrament for the *ſtrengthening* of *that ſenſe*, and to gain *more* aſſiſtance, and *more* reſolution to ſubdue thy ſin. And if there be any real *defect* in thy ſorrow,

row, repair thither, that it may be awakened, and excited to degrees more *becoming* and *effective*.

But (2) The objection preſſeth as to the *other* part of *Repentance*. *I cannot leave my ſin*, and therefore dare not approach the holy Myſtery.] But doſt thou *deſire* it? doſt thou *endeavour* it? If *ſo*, though thy deſires are imperfect, and thy endeavours weak, yet it is thy duty to preſent thy ſelf at the holy Table. *There* thou mayſt expect to have thy *deſires increaſt*, and thy *endeavours bightned* and *encouraged*. And how both the former act of repentance, which is *ſorrow*, and *this* of *averſation* are promoted by the Sacrament, I have particularly ſhewn in the former periods, to which I referre you for fuller anſwer to this, and ſuch like objections.

Thus of the ſcruples that ariſe from the firſt Head, the apprehenſion of our *own unworthineſs*. I deſcend to another.

(II) Some

(II) Some abstain from the *Sacrament* because of the Unworthiness of *Others*; *wicked* men are admitted, and they will not have *communion* with *such*. Yea, they are commanded to have no *fellowship* with them, *Eph.* 5. 11. and to *come out from among them*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 17.

For the answering this, I propose these things to be considered.

(1) Hast thou taken the *Method* of our *Saviour*, *Matt.* 18. 15. with the sinner, from whose communion thou thinkest thou must withdraw? Hast thou *privately* told him of his faults? Hast thou admonisht him before *witnesses*? Hast thou told the *Church*? If *so* thou hast done, and he persist still in his wickedness, he will no doubt be *legally* excluded from *Christian Communion*; and so the foundation of thy doubt will be taken off.

(2) How art thou *sure*, when thou seest those thou callest *wicked* come to the *Sacrament*, that they do

o not *repent* of their wickedneſs, nd come to the holy Ordinance o *beg pardon* for their ſins, and *trength* againſt them? How doſt hou know that they are not come o *bind* themſelves by deep reſolu- ions, and ſacred vows to a *ſpiri- ual warfare*, and a *new obedience?* heir coming makes *profeſſion* of *ch deſigns* and *reſolutions*, and how oſt thou *know* that *that* profeſſion *inſincere?* Haſt thou a way of rying into the heart?

But the man returns to his ſins ſoon as he hath done, and *hence* hou wilt ſay thou *knoweſt* his *hy- criſie*. This indeed were ſome- hing if it could be certainly *fore- en*; but how he will demean him- lf *after* the *Sacrament* thou canſt ot *foretel*; *This* may have more ffect upon him than *former* Sacra- ents have had; This I ſay may be, nd *charity thinketh no evil*, but *be- eveth all things*, *hopeth all things*, *Cor.* 13. or, if it now again prove herwiſe, it is no certain evidence that

that the man *only* made *pretence*, and shew; he might *then mean* and *design truly* and well; but *temptations*, and his *lusts* were *too strong* for him, and carried him away against all his endeavours and resolutions.

(3) Thou performest *other* sacred duties, in which thou *remembrest* Christ, and hast *communion* with *God*, in the *company* of *evil men*. Thou joynest in *hearing*, and publick *prayers* with *such*; and why mayst thou not be *present* at the *Sacrament* with them?

If it be pretended as a *reason* of *difference*, That hearing the word and Prayer, are *converting Ordinances*, but the *Sacrament* is *not so*: I ask thee then whether thou meanest by [*converting*] a *turning* men from *open infidelity* to the *Profession* of the *Christian Faith*; and the *owning* of Christian *Virtues*? or *only* the *turning* those that *profess this* Faith and Religion *before*, to the *practise* of them. If thou intend-

eſt the *former*, the Sacrament indeed is *no converting* Ordinance, nor are the *Word* and *Prayer* ordinarily uſed for *ſuch* purpoſes among us, where the Goſpel is already generally profeſt: And thou doſt not bear the company of the wicked of which we ſpeak in the places of publick worſhip, upon any *ſuch* expectation.

But if by *converting* ordinance thou meaneſt (as is moſt likely) ſuch a one as God uſeth as a *means* to cauſe men profeſſing the name of Chriſt to *depart from iniquity*, to *turn* from *ſin* to *holineſs*, and from the *power of Sathan unto God*; I ſee no reaſon why any ſhould think, or ſay that the *Sacrament* is no *converting Ordinance*.

If it be not, either 'tis becauſe the Sacrament is no *proper means*, or becauſe God *will* not *concurre* by his *Grace* with it. *Neither* of *theſe* can be ſaid with any ſhew of reaſon: Not the *former*; for why ſhould not the *ſolemn remembrance*

of

of *Christ*, and the *consideration* of what he hath *done* and *suffered* be a *means* for the *killing* of *sin*, which he came to *destroy*, and the promoting *holiness*, which he *lived* and *dyed* to *advance*? yea, *what* can be supposed more *likely* and *powerful* for the promoting of *that* blessed purpose? why should not the *sign* and *seal* of Gods gracious *Covenant* to give *pardon* and eternal *Glory* to all that forsake their sins, and live an holy life, be a fit instrument to provoke those that understand it to *renounce* their *sins*, and to *devote* themselves unto *holiness*? why should not that *solemn*, *sacred ingagement*, that all that know what they do, lay on themselves at the Sacrament, to *endeavour* to *depart* from every *known evil*, and to *practise* every *known duty*, be a *means* to oblige them to it? Certainly there is nothing that in the *nature of the thing* seems to be a more *likely instrument* to convert men from a *life of sin*, to a *life* of *holiness*: than the

sacred

ſacred *remembrance* of our Lord at his Table. *So that* if this Ordinance be not *converting*, it muſt be, becauſe God *will* not *concur* by *his grace* in it: But whoever ſaith *that*, ſpeaks what he *cannot know*, and *cannot prove*; He talks *without book*, and *againſt* it; and is ſo extravagant in his aſſertion, that it would be folly to attempt the confuting of him.

This I have ſaid on this occaſion, not to ingage in a *Controverſie*, but to clear a matter of *Chriſtian* practice. And the very root of *this* Objection lies in this conceit, That the *Sacrament is not a converting Ordinance*; For which, there is *nothing* but *Phancy*, and the *bare ſayings* of ſome *miſtaken* men. But now if, as I have proved, The *Sacrament* may be, and is an *Inſtrument* of *Converſion*; Then, why ſhould any refrain, becauſe evil men are admitted to it?

(4) If wicked men come to the Sacrament that are not *prepared* for

for it, their *unpreparedness* is *their sin*, and *they* shall answer for it; But *we* ought not *therefore* to neglect *our duty*, because *they* have omitted *theirs*. We may, and we ought to advise, and admonish them to prepare themselves for the Ordinance before they come to it: If they will not follow our brotherly admonition, we cannot help it; we have done, what *we* can, to render them *more worthy*, and *their* sin shall not be laid to our charge. To *prepare our selves* for the *holy Communion*, and to address our selves unto it, is *that* which we are sure concerns us; If we neglect, 'tis *our sin*, and *other* mens sins will not excuse us. *Their sinning* in *one kind*, should be no reason why we should *sin* in another: There is no reason that we should starve our selves because others take the bread that belongs not to them.

(5) If we are *worthy* Communicants, and others receive *unworthily*, *They* have *no Communion* with

us,

us, nor *we* with *them* : *They* only *eat bread*, and *drink wine*; but *we partake* of the *myſtical body* and *bloud* of our *Lord. Our Communion is with the Father*, and *with his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, and with the *faithful*, *worthy receivers*; but the unworthy *partake* neither with *us* nor *them*. If an *Ape* leap upon the Table, and eat of the bread where friends are met at an entertainment; Is he therefore a Gueſt? is he one of the company? If writings are to be mutually ſealed there among the Friends, and that creature catcheth up the ſeal, and doth as the Covenanters do; is he therefore a party? He doth the *ſame action*, but not with the ſame *deſigns* and *ends*; and *theſe* make the *communion*. The caſe is thus in reference to thoſe ungodly men that *intrude* to the Sacrament; and the pious Communicants have no reaſon to think themſelves concern'd in their company. Their *bodies* are *together*, but their *ſpirits* act, and move *different*

wayes. The *Communion* is *spiritual*, and only those that receive as they *ought* have *fellowship* with *Christ*, and with *one* another. And this were enough to answer *that* part of the objection also, that is taken from *Scripture*, where we are forbid to have *fellowship* with wicked men. But I add

(6) When Christians are prohibited wicked *Fellowship*, *Eph.* 5. 11. It is evident that the prohibition concerns *heathen mysteries*, which are there call'd the *unfruitful works of darkness*, because they were used in *close* recesses; and *v.* 12 the Apostle saith, *it is a shame to speak of those things that are done of them in secret.* Christians were not to *communicate* with the *Heathens* in their *abominable Mysteries*: No, nor may they partake with wicked men in any *action* of *vice*, nor make them their *bosom* friends, nor be concerned with them in *other* matters more than needs; especially if they are *openly* prophane, and *obstinately*

nately ungodly. But it doth not therefore follow, that they muſt forſake their Lords Table, and the moſt ſolemn expreſſions of duty to him, becauſe evil men *intrudingly* preſent themſelves unto it.

And whereas Chriſtians are commanded to *come out from among them*, and to *be ſeparate*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 17. 'Tis plain, that the perſons they are required to ſeparate from, were *Heathens* and *Idolaters* : For they are called *Unbelievers*, *v.* 14. *Infidels v.* 15. and that they were *Idolaters* is intimated *v.* 16. *What agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols?* whence it follows, *wherefore come out from among them* -- So that this place doth not concern the preſent buſineſs; Chriſtians were to *ſeparate* from the Worſhip of *Heathen Idolaters*, but it doth by no means follow hence that they muſt forſake the *true Chriſtian* Worſhip, becauſe *evil* men (who yet profeſs Chriſt) afford their preſence at it.

And this may suffice for answer to the objections taken from the *unworthiness* of *others* that are admitted in *mixt* Communions.

Lastly, The *unworthiness* of our *way* of *administration* is pretended by some as a reason, why they cannot communicate with us. As to this objection I shall not say much, because the *Toleration* his Majesty hath granted, hath given the dissenters the liberty of their own supposed better and fitter methods. Therefore I shall only speak briefly to two exceptions of this sort.

(1) The *Sacrament* is administred among us in the way of *Forms* of *Prayer*, which they think to be contrary to *spiritual* Worship. And (2) *Kneeling* at it is required, which they suppose to be contrary to the first *example*, and so an irregular posture of receiving.

To the *First* I say these things. (1) Worship and Prayer may be *spiritual*, where *Forms* are used.

For

For the *ſpiritu ality* doth not conſiſt in the *invention* of *words*, but in the *due intention* and *ingagement* of the *ſoul*. If we pray in *faith*, with *humility*, *ſelf-reſignation*, and *holy deſire* of the good things we pray for, we pray *in the ſpirit*, though *by a Form*. And if, on the other hand we expreſs our ſelves in *conceived Prayers* never ſo *fluently* and *earneſtly*, and have not *thoſe diſpoſitions* of ſoul upon us, when we pray, our prayers are *formal*, though without a *form*. Which of theſe is *fitteſt* in *it ſelf*, I ſhall not diſpute, but only ſay, that *neither* is *unlawful*, but *both* have their uſe: and add, that *one ſort* may be *propereſt* at *one* time, and the *other* ſort at *another* ſeaſon. ſo that 'tis ſilly *ſuperſtition* to be devoted to the opinion of *one* of them, as abſolutely to condemn the *other* as *unlawful*. In *publick* Worſhip, *Forms* have the advantage, in ſecuring the *gravity* and ſolemnity of it, and in *this too*, that the Worſhippers *know* what

it is they joyn in: But in *secret* devotions *conceiv'd prayers* may sometimes *suit* better with particular occasions, and may ingage the affections *more*. So that either of these may be used, as shall best accord with the ends of prayer. And when the publick *Authority* of the Church requires the *one*, we may not *scruple* it, though we are more *affected* with the *other*; especially, since we may in *private* take the liberty to use which of them we think fittest. (2) *Those* that are most *against Forms*, pray *by them*, when they joyn with *another* that prays, though he do it never so much *ex tempore*: For the People's minds are not concern'd in *inventing* the *words* they pray by; the Minister gives a *Form* to them. And if you *may* pray in the *Form* of a *private* person, dictated to you *suddenly*, and without *deliberation*, and which you do not know before, whether it will agree with *good sense*, or *sound doctrine*; why then may you not

not do it in the *Forms* of the *Church*, compos'd by *wiſe* and *reverend* perſons upon *mature conſideration* and *advice*; eſpecially when they are *ſuch*, as we *do*, or *may* know *before* to be *pious* and *grave*, ſuitable to Chriſtian *neceſſities*, and Chriſtian *Truths?* There is no good reaſon that I know to make a ſcruple of the *latter*, if we admit the *former*. But I ſhall ſay no more now of this ſubject, which would require a particular diſcourſe. I come to the *ſecond* Branch of the *Objection*.

(II) *Kneeling* at the *Sacrament* is not agreeable to the *firſt example*; our Saviour adminiſter'd to his Diſciples, *ſitting*; and perhaps you fear there is ſomething of *Popery* in the poſture of *Kneeling*.

I anſwer (1) We are not bound to a nice and punctual obſervance of *all* the *circumſtances* that were in the *firſt example*: The Sacrament was firſt adminiſtred in the *Evening*, in an *upper room*, *only* to 12

persons, and *those*, *men*, and *Ecclesiasticks*, or at least such as were *destined* to be *so*: But even the Objectors do not think we are obliged to act in the Sacrament strictly after the example of *these* particulars: and why should we suppose our selves to be tyed in the matter of *Posture*, *more* than in those *other* circumstances, which we acknowledge to be of no binding nature. (2) The *posture* of those times at Meals was not *sitting*, but *leaning*, according to the *then Custom* of the Romans. So we read *Joh.* 21. 20. That the beloved Disciple *leaned on his Masters breast at Supper*. And though the *English* Translation renders *Luk.* 22. 14. *He sat down*, and the Disciples with him: It is in conformity to our *phrase* and *custom*, which is *sitting*; for the word in the original [ἀνέπεσε] doth not imply *that posture*, but is applicable to *any* other that is used, as well as *sitting*. So that if we are *strictly* tyed to the

original

original poſture, we muſt *lean* at the Sacrament, and neither *ſit*, nor *kneel*. But (3) the Inſtitution hath not bound us to either the one or the other, but left the matter to be determined by the *general Rules* of *Decency* and *Reverence*; And ſince the *Fathers* of the *Church* have commanded *kneeling*, as the poſture moſt expreſſive of our *humility* and *reverence* in receiving the pledges of divine Love, I ſee no reaſon why any ſhould boggle at it; much leſs why they ſhould refuſe their Duty, and their Priviledge, abſtain from their ſpiritual food, and the ſolemn remembrance of their dear Lord, rather than do a thing ſo *innocent*, ſo *decent*, and ſo *reverend*, which the Authority of the Church requires from them. He hath but little appetite to his meat, that will not eat it, except he may do it in ſuch a faſhion as is agreeable to his own humour.

I, but the Objector doubts, that there is real danger, and ſomething

of *Popery* in the caſe; the *Papiſts* uſe *kneeling* to ſignify their *adoration* of the *Hoſt*, and the Scrupler fears there may be ſome ſuch thing in *our* practiſe. But this fear is very *uncharitable* and *groundleſs*, ſince our *Church* doth ſo *vehemently* and *conſtantly* declare againſt the *Tranſubſtantiation* of the *Romaniſts*, and the *adoration* of any creature; And ſince we are alwayes told that *kneeling* is required for *no other* reaſon than to *ſignify* our *humility* and *reverence*: And though the *Papiſts* do expreſs *more* by that poſture, yet ſince our Church declares, that *this* is *all ſhe* intends in reference to the *conſecrated* Elements, there is no ground why any ſhould think *more* is meant by it. *Kneeling* ſignifies *reverence* as well as *worſhip*, and the *declaration* of the perſon himſelf is enough to ſhew *which* of them he *intends*. But beſides, though the *Papiſts* adore the *bread* as the *real body* of *Chriſt*, and therefore *kneel* before it, yet *that* can be no reaſon why

why *we* ſhould *not* in this remembrance of our Lord *adore Him Himſelf : They* kneel to him as preſent *corporally*; *we* worſhip him as *virtually* and *ſpiritually* preſent.

This I might urge further as a poſitive argument for the *poſture* of *Kneeling*, over and above the uſe of it as an anſwer to the Objection. Thus all acknowledge, That *Chriſt* is to be *worſhipt*. *Receiving* the *Sacrament* is the *proper worſhip* of Chriſt; and *Kneeling* is a *proper* ſignification of *adoration* : It follows that on *this* account *Kneeling* is *fit*, and *fitteſt* to be uſed in the action of Communion. But I ſhall purſue this matter no further; what I have ſaid may ſatisfie the *modeſt* and *reaſonable*; and people that are ſet and reſolv'd in their opinions will not be ſatisfied with never ſo much more.

I ſhould now draw to an end, but I am loath to leave you without ſome particular *Rules* of *Preparation*; *Theſe* I ſhall lay down plainly,

plainly and briefly in the enſuing periods.

CHAP. VI.

THe Perſons that are to come to the Sacrament may be diſtinguiſhed into two ſorts, *viz.* Either *ſuch* as do *repent* and are *ſorry* for their *Sins*, but have not yet in any good degree *prevailed* over them; or, Thoſe *other* more *improved*, and *grown* Chriſtians who in conſiderable meaſure have maſtered their Sins, and are endowed with many habits of Holineſs, and Vertue. The *firſt* ſort are yet under the *Law*, *viz.* a ſtate of *ſenſe*, and *conviction* of ſin, but have not attained to the glorious *Liberty* of the *Sons* of *God*, or the ſtate of power over them. But the others have arrived to *that* power in competent meaſure, ſo that ſin doth not reign in their mortal bodies, becauſe they are

are not *under the Law*, but *under Grace*. For diſtinction ſake I call the firſt ſort, Bare Penitents; the ſecond, The Faithful. Now the *Preparations* that concern *theſe* are different as their ſtates are.

I. For the *bare Penitents*, and *ſorrowers* for ſin, I adviſe them to *prepare* by the *Rules* following.

(1.) Endeavour to make your ſelves as *ſenſible* as you can of the *evil* of *ſin*; Conſider it as *enmity* unto God, and to your own happineſs; as the *baſeſt ingratitude*, and the *greateſt deformity*; as a thing to be *hated* for *it ſelf*, if there were no conſideration had to its *effects*. Look upon it as the deſtroyer of your *preſent*, as well as *future*, peace, and felicity; as the enſlaver of your ſouls to the *Devil*, and that which debaſeth them to the likeneſs, and condition of *beaſts*. Aggravate ſuch conſiderations in your thoughts by all the circumſtances that may render ſin odious to you.

(2.) Con-

(2.) Conſider the *gracious* nature of the *Covenant* that God hath made with us in his Son; That by that Covenant he hath aſſured all true *Penitents* of *pardon* of their ſins, and *ſtrength* againſt them. So that be our ſins never ſo *many*, or ſo *hainous*, they will be *forgiven*, if we *repent*, and turn from them; and be they never ſo *ſtrong*, and *violent* upon us, they may be overcome, if we accept, and uſe the grace that the Covenant offers to us. Repreſent theſe things duly, and frequently to your thoughts, and for the making the deeper impreſſions on them, collect thoſe places of Scripture that ſpeak ſo fully of the *Love*, and *Mercies* of God, his *readineſs* to *pardon*, and and *deſires* of our *happineſs*, the *frequent*, and *free offers* of his kindneſs, His *invitations* to ſinners to come unto him, and his often *bewailings* of their *obſtinacy*, and *hardneſs* in running from him: Conſider that he ſent his Son into the World to ſeek

ſeek, and to ſave *them that were loſt*, to bring *ſinners to repentance*, to *take away the ſins of the World*, to *deliver* us from the *wrath to come*, and that the *World through him might be ſaved*; I ſay, draw together *ſuch* paſſages, *dwell* upon them in thy Meditations, till thou haſt *fill'd* thy ſoul with them. And then, thou wilt find great incouragement to ſeek for pardon, and wilt be ſupported againſt thoſe faintings, and deſpondencies, that the meer ſenſe of Sin, without a Saviour, might occaſion in thy Soul.

(3.) After this, ſummon up all thy *Reſolutions* againſt thy ſins. Conſider thy *baptiſmal* ingagements, how *juſt*, and *reaſonable*, and *neceſſary* they were; Reſolve to *confirm* them by *new Vows*. Content not thy ſelf with ſome *cold*, and *indefinite* intentions of leading a new Life *ſome* time or *other*, but indeavour to ſettle in a *firm*, *unalterable* purpoſe of *fighting* againſt *Sin*, and *living* unto *God*. Do all thou

thou canſt by *Reaſon*, and *Religion*, by the *Conſiderations* of *Duty* and of *Intereſt*, to fix thy ſoul *here*. And then,

(4.) Be *earneſt* with God *in Prayer*, to give thee a fuller ſight of Sin, and *clearer*, *ſurer* thoughts of *pardoning* Mercy: To preſent thee with *more* arguments to heighten thy reſolutions, and to make thy ſoul *more* capable of being moved by them. I ſay, apply thy ſelf unto God by *Prayer*, *publick*, *private*, and *ſecret* prayer, confeſſing thy own vileneſs, acknowledging his Mercies, and reſolving new obedience. And being thus prepared,

(5.) Look on the Holy Sacrament as thy great *Duty*, and *remedy*. As *that* to which God calls thee, and the ſtate and neceſſities of thy ſoul call thee; As that Ordinance in which thou *art* to *ſeek*, and *mayſt expect pardon*, and *ſtrength*, *reſolution*, and *peace*. Conſider *this*, and raiſe thine *appetite*, and expectations;

pectations; for *they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs ſhall be filled.*

And now when thou haſt exerciſed thy ſelf *in theſe* acts, and the time of the holy Communion approacheth, Then

(*6.*) Imploy thy mind in *awakening*, and *affectionate* thoughts of Chriſt thy Lord. Conſider the *greatneſs* of his *Condeſcenſion*, the *kindneſs* of his *Undertaking*, the *holineſs* of his *Life*, the *purity* of his *Doctrine*, the *heavineſs* of his *Sufferings*, the *power* of his *Reſurrection*, and the *glory* of his *Aſcenſion*. Turn thy thoughts earneſtly, and often, upon *theſe*, and *ſuch* inſtances of the Hiſtory of the holy Jeſus, and by them diſpoſe thy ſelf to a befitting remembrance of him at his Table.

And (Laſtly) Gather up all thy thoughts and reſolutions together, *viz.* thy *apprehenſions* of the *vileneſs* of *ſin*, of the *Grace* of the *Covenant*, and the *merits* of thy *Lord*;

Thy

Thy *purpoſes* of leaving every evil way, and of renewing thy *baptiſmal Vows*; and ſay to thy ſelf, Now is the time come, that I muſt uſe *theſe thoughts*, and *reſolves*, that I may obtain pardon, and ſtrength, victory over ſin, and aſſurance of happineſs; My Lord invites me to the great *repreſentation* of the evil of ſin in his *own ſufferings*; to ſee his *body wounded*, and his *ſoul made an Offering for Sin*, in the *Type* of *bread broken*, and *wine powred out*: To remember his *Conqueſt* over *Sin*, by *Death*, and a glorious *Reſurrection*; To ſee the *Covenant* of *Grace*, and pardon *ſealed*: He invites me to *theſe* Priviledges, and calls upon me to bind my ſelf ſtronger in this holy Covenant, and thereby to make my ſelf the ſubject of thoſe bleſſings it aſſures, and conveys. I ſay, imploy thy ſoul in ſuch thoughts, and bring them with thee to the Lords Table, ſpread them before him *there* in humble Confeſſions, Supplications, and Acknowledgments,

knowledgments, and thou mayſt then expect to receive the benefit thou art ſeeking after.

Theſe are *Preparations* for a *bare Penitent*, that hath yet made but little progreſs in ſubduing of his Sins. And though the *higheſt degrees* of all theſe are not abſolutely neceſſary to the coming of *ſuch* to the Lords Table; yet the *more* they have been exerciſed in them, ſo much the *better* it is, by ſo much they are *more prepared*, and ſo *much more* they may expect of the benefits. But if your minds, that have not been uſed to *ſpiritual* things, will not fix long on *ſuch* thoughts, and meditations; Ingage them, *as far* as you *can*; proceed in the Method preſcribed with that *diligence* and *care* that becomes one that is *ſerious*: And *then*, though your preparations be *imperfect now*, they may be *more compleat* againſt *another ſeaſon*. If thou art ſenſible they have been ſo *defective*, maintain and keep up that ſenſe, and reſolve upon

on it, to indeavour to fit thy self *better* for *another* Sacrament, by renewing the *same* method, which will be *easier* for thee in the *progress* than it was in the *beginning*.

As for the other sort, *viz.* II. *Those* that have *advanced* in the *conquest* of their *sins*; They are to *act over all the former particulars*, that I have advised to the *bare Penitents*: For being *yet sinners*, and *imperfect*, they have need to use *that* Method: And there are these few *other Directions* to be briefly added that do further concern them.

(1.) Call your selves to a *particular* Account concerning your sins, examining *what vices* you are *most addicted* to; and *what* are the *sins* of your *tempers*, or of your *Profession*, and *Calling*; when you have found *those*, exercise *particular acts* of *Repentance* upon them, and renew your resolutions against them. Consider, that allowance of them is inconsistent with *sincerity*, and a state of true *regeneration*; That 'tis necessary

neceſſary you ſhould oppoſe, and ſubdue them; and that the holy *Sacrament* is to be uſed as a *means* for that bleſſed end.

(2.) Examine *what ground* you have got *upon your ſins* ſince the *laſt Sacrament*, whether you are now more *tender* and *fearful* of *offending God*, than you were *before*; whether your *inclination* to any evil be *more weakened*, and mortified? If *ſo*, take incouragement hence *to go on* with more Chriſtian *vigour* and *reſolution*. If *not*, *humble* your ſelves for your *unfruitfulneſs*; and indeavour to diſpoſe your ſouls to make a *better* uſe of the *next* opportunity.

(3) Inquire into the ſtate of your ſouls as to your *Graces*: *what Graces* are *wanting*, and *what* are *weak*? *which* are *growing*, and *which* at a *ſtand*? and when you have found the condition of your ſouls as to *theſe*, then exerciſe your *meditations* upon *thoſe particulars* in the *Life*, *Doctrine*, and *Precepts* of

of your Lord whom you are to remember at his Table, that may be *proper* for *your case*; Apply your thoughts and cares and resolutions that way. *Design* & *resolve* to attend the holy Sacrament for the *supply* of those *wants*, and to endeavour to use it *so*, that the *needed graces* may be *obtain'd*, and the *weak* ones may be *strengthened*; that *those* that are at a *stay* may be put into *motion* forwards, and *those* that are *growing* may be *further improved*. If you thus provide, and imploy your selves in the method before remembred, you will then be meet partakers of the *holy Mysteries*, and may assure your selves of the *blessings* and *advantages* which they convey.

THis Subject would have required larger discourse, but my *present* business was principally with the *careless*, and *negligent*, to whose condition I have mostly applied my self. For the *others*, that are sollicitous

tous for their ſouls, and deſirous to be further informed about this great, and important affair of *Preparation*, I ſhall adviſe them to get, and carefully to read, and digeſt two excellent books of the Sacrament. The former called *Menſa Myſtica*, or a *Diſcourſe concerning the Sacrament of the Lords Supper*, by Dr. *Simon Patrick*; and the *latter*, named the **Chriſtian Sacrifice**, containing moſt excellent *Meditations* and *Prayers* both *before*, and *after* the *Sacrament*.

In the *firſt deſign* of this little Diſcourſe I intended to have added ſome things of that ſort for your uſe. But while I was thinking of it, my Pious, Learned, and excellent Friend the Author, ſent me one of thoſe his laſt books, the *Devotion*, and *Piety* of which is *extraordinary*; and there is nothing, that I know, fitter to *prepare* your *affections*, and to excite them to the nobleſt height of *deſire* and *love* than thoſe *heavenly Meditations*; And you cannot

cannot use more *proper*, *judicious* or *affectionate Prayers*, than those he hath annext. So that I was exceeding glad when I saw this useful, much needed Work so incomparably well done, that there was no occasion of my doing any more in it, than earnestly to recommend that book to your perusal. And I intreat you to get it into your Houses, and from time to time to indeavour to warm your souls by it, when you are *preparing* for the *Sacrament*, and by it to *fix* you in your *resolutions* of *living according* to your *ingagements there*, when you have attended on that blessed Ordinance.

And now, my *Friends*, I leave you to the *blessing* of *God*, and the *consideration* of what I have said. Whatever judgment may be made of it, I have this testimony, that I *meant* it *sincerely*. And I shall never cease to pray, that both you, and I may sincerely practice according to it.

Your Faithful Monitor and Servant,

J. G.